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ABSTRACT

This collection of training materials is designed for all persons currently or soon-to-be engaged in counseling roles, especially those working in substance abuse programs. The counseling techniques in this manual focus on the following areas of concern: (1) the nature of the helping relationship; (2) empathy, feelings, and interpersonal process recall; (3) attitudes and values; and (4) problem-solving strategies. Course goals, training objectives, client-counselor interaction scales, evaluation materials, and trainer qualifications are also provided. (HLM)

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COUNSELOR TRAINING: SHORT-TERM CLIENT SYSTEMS

Training Manual for Counseling Skills

PARTICIPANT MANUAL

by

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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS AND HISTORY

The development of this manual and the counseling skills training model it presents was begun in 1970 by Lance Harris, Ph.D., presently at American Lake Verterans Administration Hospital, Tacoma, Washington; Robert F. Dendy, Ph.D., presently at the National Drug Abuse Center; and Norman Kagan, Ph.D., Michigan State University, who also developed the Interpersonal Process Recall.

In 1972, under a grant from the Michigan Governor's Office of Drug Abuse and Alcoholism, this counseling skills training model was written in *A Survival Manual for the Drug Center Volunteer*. The authors were William Hinds, Ph.D., Mary James, Michael Gieszer, and Beth Jacobs Gillispie.

The *Survival Manual* was adopted and substantially revised by the National Drug Abuse Training Center in 1973, under its new title, *Training Manual for Counseling Skills*. For the past three years, thousands of participants and trainers from across the country have been using this manual. In an effort to be responsive to the feedback of these persons and to current developments in counseling, the *Training Manual for Counseling Skills* has been revised once again by the National Drug Abuse Center for Training and Resource Development.

For their help with this revision, we would particularly like to thank Glen Fischer and Ginny Robinson.

Beth Jacobs Gillispie
May 1977

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS AND HISTORY iii

USING THIS MANUAL 1

CHAPTER ONE: COURSE DESCRIPTION 3

- Purpose 5
- Intended Audience 5
- Course Goals 5
- Major Subject Areas 6
- Training Objectives 7
- Owning-of-Feelings Scale 8
- Responding-to-Feelings Scale 9
- Specific-Labeling-of-Feelings-and-Sources Scale 10
- Responding-to-Feelings-in-Conflict Scale 11
- Responding-to-Values Scale 12
- Trainer Qualifications 13
- Learning Activities 14
- Course Materials 14
- Evaluation 15
- Course Schedule 17

CHAPTER TWO: WORKBOOK FOR COUNSELING SKILLS 21

- Introduction 23
- Unit 1: Course Introduction and Overview I-0-1
  - Module 1: Large Group Introduction and Pretesting I-1-1
  - Module 2: Ice Breakers I-2-1
  - Module 3: Introduction to the Helping Relationship I-3-1
  - Module 4: Small Group Introduction and Norm Setting I-4-1
- Unit II: Empathy II-0-1
  - Module 5: Definitions II-5-1
  - Module 6: Owning of Feelings II-6-1
  - Module 7: Responding to Feelings II-7-1
  - Module 8: Specific Labeling of Feelings and Sources II-8-1
  - Module 9: Responding to Feelings in Conflict II-9-1
  - Module 10: Owning of Listener Feelings II-10-1
  - Module 11: IPR: Interpersonal Process Recall II-11-1

Unit III: Attitudes and Values III-0-1

Module 12: Attitudes III-12-1
Module 13: Values III-13-1
Module 14: Interpersonal Process Recall (Part II) III-14-1

Unit IV: Problem Solving IV-0-1

Module 15: Problem Solving IV-15-1

APPENDICES

Theory and Rationale of the Counseling Process A-1
Feeling Words A-7
CT:STCS—A Multi-Phase Program for Training of Trainers A-15

Annotated Bibliography for Counseling and Training B-1

USING THIS MANUAL*

The *Training Manual for Counseling Skills* is organized into two major chapters and appendices. The first chapter contains an introduction to the course and describes its purpose; it presents the course goals and objectives, alternate course scheduling, and a summary evaluation report. The second chapter is the workbook that will be used during training.

The course materials are bound in a looseleaf notebook so that you can add your own notes in the appropriate sections, and keep the manual updated with any revisions issued by the National Drug Abuse Center (NDAC).

The pages in Chapter One are numbered consecutively; the pages in the workbook in Chapter Two are numbered according to their location in a particular unit and module: for example, page 3 of Module 5 in Unit II is numbered II-5-3. Pages that introduce units belong to no module and are indicated with a 0 (e.g., I-0-1 or II-0-1, etc.).

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* PROBLEMS WITH PRONOUNS AND POLEMICS

Throughout this manual we have had to face the problem that the content refers equally to both men and women and that we do not have a universally accepted single word in the English language to use when referring to a member of either sex. We have therefore fallen back on the universal use of male pronouns to indicate a person of either sex and hope that the readers will understand our intentions.

CHAPTER ONE

COURSE DESCRIPTION

CHAPTER ONE

COURSE DESCRIPTION

PURPOSE

Most persons would agree that it is the counselor in the drug treatment and rehabilitation program who is the backbone of service delivery. The extent to which a counselor is effective in this role, both in the eyes of his clients and of his program, is dependent upon many factors. One major factor is the quality of the counselor's helping skills. It is toward this end that *Counselor Training: Short-term Client Systems* has been developed: to train counselors in basic listening and responding skills in the areas of empathy, values and attitudes, and problem solving.

It is not the purpose of the course to teach counseling theory. Most counselors, whether professional (degreed) or paraprofessional, can state the principles of effective helping relationships, empathy, and so on. Few can actually demonstrate effective responses that reflect these principles. Therefore, this is a "how-to-do-it" course.

Whether the training is used as a vehicle to meet the new credentialing requirements for drug abuse counselors, or as ongoing inservice work, or as an introductory or refresher course, the intent is to significantly improve the quality of drug treatment services by enabling counselors to establish and maintain more effective helping relationships with their clients.

INTENDED AUDIENCE

The course is intended for all persons who are currently engaged or are about to be engaged in counseling roles and who need to develop the skills specified in the course goals and objectives. There are no minimum skill or experience requirements.

Participants may work in programs directly related to substance abuse or in agencies whose clients have drug or drug-related problems. Examples of the types of settings from which participants have been drawn include hot lines, crisis centers, mental health centers, outreach programs, free clinics, methadone programs, therapeutic communities, inpatient and outpatient treatment systems, youth centers, runaway houses, criminal justice programs, troubled employee programs, schools, and lay counseling programs.

COURSE GOALS

The overall goal of the *CT:STCS* course is to provide participants with additional skills in the areas of empathy, values and attitudes exploration, and problem solving so that they can establish and maintain more effective helping relationships with their clients.

A second goal is to provide a learning experience for participants that increases their—

- appreciation for the responsibilities, the influence and the limitations of the counselor in the helping relationship;
- understanding of the dynamics of the helping relationship;
- appreciation of the need for self-awareness on the part of the counselor;
- understanding of the client's affective, cognitive, and behavioral processes;
- appreciation for the necessity to respond to the client as a whole person, with drug abuse or drug-related problems being symptomatic or incidental to other concerns.

MAJOR SUBJECT AREAS

Rather than approach counseling from the perspective of a single school of thought (for example, gestalt, transactional analysis, behaviorist) the course is designed with generic conceptual areas that define skills basic to any helping relationship. These are reflected in three major subject areas:

1. **Empathy.** This component provides the foundation for building trust with the client and helping the client explore the feelings (affective processes) attached to his concern. The focus is on listening and responding skills that demonstrate empathic understanding. It also includes exploration of the counselor's affective processes that may influence the helping relationship.

2. **Values and Attitudes.** This component provides the link between empathy and problem solving. The focus is on building skills that enable the counselor to help the client explore the values and attitudes represented in his concern, and the corresponding thought processes and behavior. Beyond hearing and responding to this deeper level of meaning, this component also explores the effect of the counselor's personal values and attitudes on the helping relationship.

3. **Problem Solving.** Having identified and clarified the client's feelings and values, the counselor and client can focus on rational decision making and changes in his behavior. The problem-solving component includes problem definition, exploration of alternatives, making plans for change, and preparing to act on plans for change.

TRAINING OBJECTIVES

By the end of the counseling skills session, trainees will be able to—

- demonstrate their counseling skills by making at least 80 percent of their written response minimally empathic, facilitative and appropriate when presented with a client problem statement, as judged by objective, experienced raters;

- correctly discriminate between a Level One response and a Level Two or Three response when presented with tape recorded stimulus material four out of five times;*

- make spontaneous responses at Levels Two or Three, 80 percent of the time, as judged by a trainer, when presented with tape recorded stimulus material, and during a brief client/counselor interchange;*

- demonstrate their listening skills by correctly discriminating between a Level One, Level Two, or Level Three client statement, according to "Owning-of-Feelings Scale" (attached) when presented with tape recorded stimulus material;

- identify and correctly label their own feelings and attitudes elicited by the tape recorded stimulus material;

- formulate responses to tape recorded stimulus material and to a brief client/counselor interchange that acknowledges counselor feelings and attitudes and maintains focus on the client by appropriately using at least two of the four roadblock movers listed in the *Training Manual for Counseling Skills*;

- utilize appropriately at least 9 of the 12 problem-solving steps (outlined in the *Training Manual for Counseling Skills*) when placed in a brief client/counselor interchange. (Appropriateness of the steps chosen will be judged by the trainer, utilizing client feedback, problem content, and the problem-solving checklist.)

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*For each of the scales provided on the following pages "Responding to Feelings;" "Specific Labeling of Feelings and Sources,;" "Responding to Feelings in Conflict;" "Responding to Values."

OWNING-OF-FEELINGS SCALE

LEVEL ONE: The speaker does not own his own feelings by–

- *denying* his feelings or *avoiding* discussion of them;
- *detaching* himself from his feelings, and describing them as though they are not part of himself but come from outside himself, or are forced on him by other people or situations;
- *minimizing* feelings or talking about them in an abstract or superficial manner.

LEVEL TWO: The speaker attempts to own his feelings by–

- describing his feelings in a *vague* manner, or *distancing* them by using past or future terms;
- acknowledging his feelings but discussing them in an *intellectual* or *philosophical* manner;
- stating his feelings *without* clearly linking them to a *source*.

LEVEL THREE: The speaker owns and takes responsibility for his own feelings by–

- identifying his immediate (here and now) feelings *clearly* and *genuinely*;
- expressing the *intensity* of his feelings;
- specifying the *source* of his feelings.

RESPONDING-TO-FEELINGS SCALE

LEVEL ONE: The listener does not facilitate the speaker by—

- *denying* speaker's feelings, putting them down, ridiculing, *judging*, or offering quick *solutions*;
- responding only to the *facts*, the situation, or the storyline;
- *ignoring* the speaker's *feelings*.

LEVEL TWO: The listener facilitates the speaker by—

- *reflecting* the stated feelings of the speaker, using the same or similar words;
- maintaining nonverbal behavior that is *attentive* to the speaker;
- *accepting* the speaker's feelings by being nonjudgmental.

LEVEL THREE: The listener facilitates the speaker by—

- responding to stated feelings and to *undercurrent* feelings that the speaker has implied but has not clearly stated;
- acknowledging the *intensity* of the speaker's feelings with appropriate nonverbal behavior;
- responding to *nonverbal* cues from the speaker.

SPECIFIC-LABELING-OF-FEELINGS-AND-SOURCES SCALE

LEVEL ONE: The listener does not facilitate the speaker by—

- responding to the speaker's stated feelings but *ignoring* the *sources* of those feelings;
- *moving* the speaker away from his immediate concerns to *irrelevant, impersonal,* or *abstract* issues;
- responding to speaker's stated feelings and sources in language that is *less specific* than the language that the speaker used.

LEVEL TWO: The listener facilitates the speaker by—

- responding to the speaker's stated feelings but matching it to an incorrect or *inappropriate source*;
- *reflecting* the stated feelings and sources of the speaker using the same or similar words;
- *centering* on the speaker's immediate concern.

LEVEL THREE: The listener facilitates the speaker by—

- responding to the speaker's feelings and sources in language that is *more specific* than the language that the speaker used;
- *focusing* on those feelings and sources that are most important to the speaker's immediate concerns;
- responding to *stated* feelings, to *undercurrent* feelings, and to the sources of those feelings.

RESPONDING-TO-FEELINGS-IN-CONFLICT SCALE

LEVEL ONE: The listener does not facilitate the speaker by—

- acknowledging the speaker's feelings in conflict but *judging* one feeling to be more right or wrong than the other, taking sides, or giving advice;
- responding to *only one* of the speaker's feelings in conflict;
- recognizing the speaker's conflict but responding only to his *situational* conflict or generalizing to examples outside the speaker's personal world.

LEVEL TWO: The listener facilitates the speaker by—

- responding to the speaker's *feelings* in conflict but not to the source(s) of those feelings;
- *reflecting* the speaker's feelings and source(s) in conflict, using the same or similar words;
- *responding* to the speaker's feelings in conflict and their source(s) by using examples the speaker has described.

LEVEL THREE: The listener facilitates the speaker by—

- responding to the speaker's stated feelings in conflict and to the source(s) of those feelings using language that is *more specific* than the language used by the speaker;
- responding to the *impact* of the speaker's conflict;
- responding to *undercurrent feelings* and *source(s)* that the speaker implies but does not clearly state.

RESPONDING-TO-VALUES SCALE

LEVEL ONE: The listener does not facilitate the speaker by—

- *judging*, agreeing with, disagreeing with, or moralizing about the speaker's values;
- *ignoring* the speaker's values;
- responding to the speaker's values using *less specific* terms than the speaker uses or generalizing to examples outside of the speaker's world.

LEVEL TWO: The listener facilitates the speaker by—

- reflecting the *stated* values of the speaker by using the same or similar words;
- responding to the speaker's values but *not* to the *feelings* associated with them;
- using examples that are *meaningful* to the speaker.

LEVEL THREE: The listener facilitates the speaker by—

- responding *more specifically* to the speaker's values;
- responding to the speaker's stated values and checking out other *undercurrent* values that may be present but not clearly stated;
- responding to the *feelings* associated with the speaker's values.

TRAINER QUALIFICATIONS

It is assumed that trainers in this counselor training program are committed to safeguarding and perpetuating training that contributes to the strengthening of high quality care delivery systems.

The small-group work must be conducted by a trainer or training team with a trainer-trainee ratio of one to six. The total training group size may range from six to thirty, with eighteen or twenty-four as the optimal large-group size. Every member of the training team should have–

- successfully completed the *Counselor Training: Short-term Client Systems Course;*
- received training for trainers specific to this counseling skills training model;
- previous successful experiences in counseling situations similar to those that will be faced by the trainee population (optimally, in similar work settings);
- strong small-group process and training skills;
- the necessary resources for back-up supervision, or access to third party resources for supervision and/or referral when needed.

Being thus qualified, the trainer will have firsthand knowledge of the training goals, structure, and developmental learning stages of the course, and will also be able to anticipate and deal with the impact of the training experience on the trainee.

The trainer is expected to have mastery of the content, concepts, and implementation of the skills presented in this manual. The successful trainer (as well as counselor) functions within a conceptual framework–one which accounts for developmental learning as well as intra- and interpersonal dynamics. It is assumed, therefore, that the trainer's conceptual framework is in harmony with the theory and objectives underlying this training model.

Having had some successful experiences in helping relationships similar to those in which the trainees are involved in their work settings, the trainer will have personalized knowledge that he may share with his trainees at appropriate times. It will also enable him to relate more effectively to the problems and successes in helping relationships that the trainees present.

Having a strong grasp of small-group process, theory and skills will enable the trainer to create an environment that facilitates learning; manage the group climate, tasks, and process; and maintain a purposeful direction and methodology. Such ability is essential, since the trainer has relationships with each member of the group as well as with the group as a whole.

Access to resources is particularly essential for beginning trainers, but important to all trainers regardless of experience. At one time or another, we all need someone to turn to for help in processing our experiences.

Furthermore, the trainer must be functioning at a high level of facilitative effectiveness. Research by Carkhuff (1969), Aspy (1972), Leiberman, Yalom, et al. (1973), and others has indicated that trainees gain more from trainers whose functioning is high. Conversely, the functioning levels of trainees tend to deteriorate or show no increase beyond an entry level with trainers whose functioning is low. The implication is that trainers who cannot perform adequately in human interactions cannot teach others to perform adequately. In behavioral terms, this means that the trainer as a teacher must be able to model the skills he is teaching.

The effective trainer demonstrates competence, confidence, enthusiasm, spontaneity, flexibility, innovativeness, creativity, an ability to seek help when needed, receptivity to feedback and input from his trainees, and a willingness to learn from what he teaches. Even though the training model is systematic and structured, it is not a completely self-instructional programmed learning model. It is the trainer as a high level functioning human being who makes it work.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

The course is basically experiential and occurs primarily in small groups. Each major concept that is introduced is described in a brief mini-lecture discussion and has explanations with written practice examples in the *Training Manual for Counseling Skills*. Participants learn to recognize and differentiate facilitative and nonfacilitative counselor responses through exercises using a prerecorded stimulus tape and structured rating scales. Participants then write their own responses to prerecorded client statements. Finally, participants integrate and practice counseling skills in paired interactions with one another. This process is called Interpersonal Process Recall and allows each individual to (1) experience the impact of the helping tools he has learned, (2) incorporate his own style into his responses using new skills, and (3) receive specific feedback about his strengths and weaknesses as a helper. The interactions are either audio- or videotaped for the purpose of the recall. The activities are described in more detail in the section that follows.

COURSE MATERIALS

Trainer's Manual:	course background information and guidelines for course delivery
Training Manual for Counseling Skills:	explanations and exercises for each skill area being learned
Audiotape:	prerecorded client statements and counselor responses for use in skill-building exercises
Evaluation Instruments:	pre- and posttests and guidelines for test administration and scoring

EVALUATION

The *Counselor Training: Short-term Client Systems* course has been delivered through the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) supported National Training System since January 1973. Since that time, extensive evaluation of the course has included objective testing of participant learning and skill acquisition through pre- and posttest procedures; random sampling of persons in programs where the course has been delivered; evaluation of participant satisfaction with the course; and a doctoral dissertation comparing the training results within a population of university peer counselors and federal employees having counseling responsibilities with counseling center staff.

Over time, the evaluation procedures used have changed from the originally cumbersome and complex system of rating participant responses in a tape recorded simulated counseling interaction to the rating of participant responses to written client statements. (No significant differences were found between the two methods.) In all cases, when the conditions of training were consistent with the requirements outlined in this manual (trainer qualifications, course structure, etc.) significant changes in the trainee skills were documented. Ratings based on the participants' overall satisfaction with the course have been recorded consistently at between 4 and 5 (on a scale where "1" is low and "5" is high).

The response to the course in the field has also been positive. UCLA and Michigan State University have offered this course for credit. Some states are using the course to meet credentialing requirements. Many treatment programs have adopted the course for training their paid and volunteer staff. Over 20,000 copies of the course materials have been distributed since it was made available to the public.

There are not many significant differences in the characteristics of the various training populations: 50 percent of the trainees have been male, 50 percent female; approximately 60 percent of the trainees have had at least a B.A. degree, 40 percent have had some college, a high school diploma or less. The average participant has had about one year of counseling experience. Participants have been drawn from almost all the states and have represented countries all over the world.

COURSE SCHEDULE

COMMENTS ON SCHEDULING

The schedule should be regarded as a guideline for time planning, rather than a rigid timetable. The amount of time required for individual small groups to complete a given module will vary. More time may be spent on one, less time on another. However, the trainer must continually be aware of the amount of material to be covered in relation to the amount of time available.

If, due to limitations in time, staff, facilities, etc., a schedule other than the three mentioned must be chosen, the following guidelines are suggested:

- Sessions should not be less than 3 hours.
- There should not be fewer than 2 sessions per week (either 2 half days per week, or 1 full day per week).
- The sequence of events must be maintained.

If the total time available for training does not allow for the presentation of all modules in their entirety, the following information should be considered:

- The time designated for IPR Practice is the most important part of the training. It provides the trainees with the opportunity to integrate and actually practice the previously discussed skills, explore their uses and receive feedback on their performance as a listener/helper. Therefore, it is important that these modules not be drastically shortened or omitted.
- The problem-solving section of the counseling skills training is that which is least in need of a trainer's management. Therefore, the amount of time actually spent on this module can be less than what is scheduled. If the process itself is clearly presented, trainees can continue its practice on their own.

COURSE SCHEDULE

TIME		ACTIVITY	GROUP SIZE
3 hours	**UNIT I:**	**COURSE INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW**	
(1 hour)	Module 1:	Large Group Introduction and Pretesting	Large
(45 minutes)	Module 2:	Ice Breakers	Large
(15 minutes)	Module 3:	Introduction to the Helping Relationship	Large
(1 hour)	Module 4:	Small Group Introduction and Norm Setting	Small
18 hours	**UNIT II:**	**EMPATHY**	
(30 minutes)	Module 5:	Definitions	Small
(1½ hours)	Module 6:	Owning of Feelings	Small
(2 hours)	Module 7:	Responding to Feelings	Small
(1½ hours)	Module 8:	Specific Labeling of Feelings and Sources	Small
(1½ hours)	Module 9:	Responding to Feelings in Conflict	Small
(2½ hours)	Module 10:	Owning of Listener Feelings	Small
(8½ hours)	Module 11:	IPR: Interpersonal Process Recall	Small
6 hours	**UNIT III:**	**ATTITUDES AND VALUES**	
(1 hour)	Module 12:	Attitudes	Small
(2 hours)	Module 13:	Values	Small
(3 hours)	Module 14:	Interpersonal Process Recall (Part II)	Small
6 hours	**UNIT IV:**	**PROBLEM SOLVING**	
(5 hours)	Module 15:	Problem Solving	Small
(1 hour)		Posttest	Large

33 HOURS TOTAL TIME REQUIRED

FIVE-DAY SCHEDULE

	Morning 8:30 - 12:00	Afternoon 1:00 - 4:30
Day 1	Course Introduction and Overview and Pretesting Definitions (Modules 1 - 5)	Owning of Feelings Responding to Feelings (Modules 6 - 7)
Day 2	Specific Labeling of Feelings Responding to Feelings in Conflict (Modules 8 - 9)	Owning of Listener Feelings Interpersonal Process Recall (Modules 10 - 11)
Day 3	Interpersonal Process Recall (Module 11)	Interpersonal Process Recall (Module 11)
Day 4	Attitudes Responding to Values (Modules 12 - 13)	Interpersonal Process Recall (Module 14)
Day 5	Problem Solving (Module 15)	Problem Solving Posttest (Module 15)

IN-SERVICE TRAINING SCHEDULE

The above schedule may be taken in 3½ hour blocks of time and conducted in 10 in-service training sessions over a period of 5 weeks with 2 sessions per week.

TWO-WEEKEND SCHEDULE

First Weekend

	Morning 9:00 - 12:00	Afternoon 1:30 - 4:30	Evening 7:00 - 10:00
Friday			Introduction Overview Pretest
Saturday	Small Group Introduction and Definitions Owning of Feelings	Responding to Feelings Specific Labeling of Feelings and Sources	Responding to Feelings in Conflict Owning of Listener Feelings
Sunday	Empathy Practice IPR	Empathy Practice IPR	Empathy Practice IPR

Second Weekend

Saturday	Review Empathy Skills Responding to Values and Attitudes	Responding to Values Practice	Responding to Values Practice IPR
Sunday	Problem Solving	Problem Solving	Posttest

CHAPTER TWO

WORKBOOK FOR COUNSELING SKILLS

CHAPTER TWO

WORKBOOK FOR COUNSELING SKILLS

INTRODUCTION

As you use this manual, you will be learning a set of skills and tools that will aid in developing the helping relationship. You may be refamiliarizing yourself with skills that you already possess, but we ask that you try out this set of skills, as instructed, so that you can practice and receive feedback on your knowledge and use of this model.

As the pace of life around us accelerates, we tend to become increasingly lost in facts and ideas; the level of feelings is often ignored. Our terms of interaction are "I agree" or "I disagree." "I understand," however, is a statement rarely heard. This attempt to understand another person seems to require something very basic: that is, a desire to understand and an expression of that desire. We are assuming that you, as a person, do care. The program in which you are about to engage is designed to facilitate your effectiveness as a helper, to translate your concern into constructive action.

UNIT I

COURSE INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

UNIT I

COURSE INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

INTRODUCTION

Unit I is designed to acquaint you with each other and with the training environment, and to introduce the course content and methodology; it also includes registration and pre-testing. There are four modules in this unit:

- Module I: Large Group Introduction and Pretesting
- Module 2: Ice Breakers
- Module 3: Introduction to the Helping Relationship
- Module 4: Small Group Introduction and Norm Setting

Unit I will require about 3 hours to complete.

MODULE 1

LARGE GROUP INTRODUCTION AND PRETESTING

The purpose of this module is to orient you to the training environment (e.g. places to eat, park, get messages, etc.) and to complete registration and pretest procedures.

The purpose of the pretest (and posttest) is to provide the trainers with feedback on their ability to *impart skills*—the tests are not meant to be used as evaluations of the trainees. Test scores are given only to those participants requesting their own scores; they are not given to supervisors.

The following space may be used to record any necessary information.

MODULE 2

ICE BREAKERS

The activities that will be conducted by the trainer during this module will help you become acquainted with the other participants in the training program, and will serve to identify them as possible future resources.

In this module, all that is necessary is to follow the trainer's instructions.

MODULE 3

INTRODUCTION TO THE HELPING RELATIONSHIP

The purpose of this module is to acquaint you with the schedule for the course, the content areas to be addressed, and the process by which the skills will be learned. A small amount of theory pertaining to the helping relationship and its relevance to a concept of the whole person will be presented. The small groups will also be formed at this time.

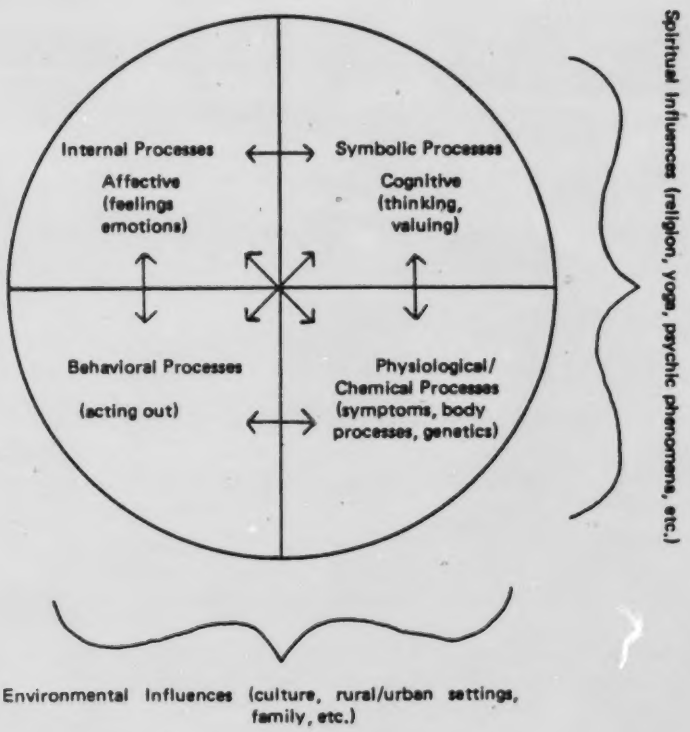


Figure 1

The helping relationship consists of a speaker (the person presenting the problem) and a listener (the person acting as helper). The ultimate goal of the helper is to enable the speaker to reach his own decision concerning a course of action that will solve the problem. The entire helping process has three stages. The first involves empathic listening and communication to help the speaker get in touch with his *feelings*.

Secondly, the listener helps the speaker integrate his feelings about the problem with his *thinking* about it: he helps the speaker to consider it with his own values and attitudes.

Thirdly, the listener helps the speaker integrate his feelings and values into a problem-solving process: he helps the speaker decide *what* to do about the problem and explores with him *how* to go about doing it. Although the stages are not mutually exclusive, (two or more of the stages may occur at the same time in the interaction) their division into steps may help clarify some of the complex events you will participate in as a helper. A complete helping relationship would consist of this entire process, but a speaker may need help from a listener only for parts of the process. Remember, a person needs to learn to solve his own problems.

Graphically, the helping relationship looks like this:

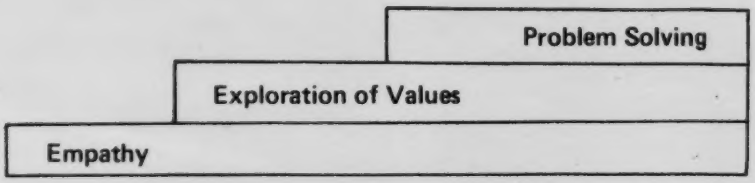


Figure 2

EMPATHY

Being asked to help someone with a serious problem can often be overwhelming. The helper should start by listening and responding to feelings. This is empathy, and the emphasis is on feelings.

Feelings are often distrusted and usually relegated to the shadowy parts of ourselves. We learn that we should not feel anger, that we should learn to strive for emotional control, and that those who lose that control are weak. Yet, we know that feelings are real. We know that they are part of our physical existence and that they cannot be wished away. We know also that feelings, however much they are ignored and distrusted and trampled upon, will certainly affect our behavior.

A person with a problem has feelings, many of which are hidden away. The helper's job is to enable that person to discover and understand these feelings. To rectify a problem a person must first understand his own feelings about it. Then and only then does it make sense to decide on a course of action designed to solve the problem.

Empathy, the listener's understanding response to the feelings of the speaker, is important because it allows the speaker to feel safe and accepted, not judged or condemned because of his feelings. When you as helper respond to a speaker empathically, that person will feel comfortable, and will be motivated to continue talking to you and to further explore his own feelings with you. As you facilitate both your own and the speaker's understanding of

his feelings, you build trust and help the speaker better comprehend his problem. You will be learning to *listen*, to *understand*, and to *communicate*.

- **It is not enough to listen unless you understand what you've heard.**
- **It is of little use to understand unless you communicate that understanding.**
- **The communication is useful only if the information can be applied by the other person to his decision-making process.**

VALUES

After you have begun to help a speaker clarify his feelings about a problem, you will also want to explore the speaker's thoughts about his problem. You will again be listening, understanding, and communicating, but your focus will be on the aspects of the problem the speaker sees as positive (rewarding) and those he sees as negative (punishing). The speaker's values will also play a part in his decision-making process.

PROBLEM SOLVING

Once you have helped the speaker clarify his feelings and values and attitudes, he is ready to explore alternatives and solutions to his problem. You can assist this process by understanding that decision making can be effectively accomplished according to a set of guidelines that also incorporates empathic communication. You will learn to help the speaker clarify his problem, explore alternatives, plan strategies for change, and test alternatives.

SUMMARY

Feelings are the common ground, values are the basis for patterns of behavior, and problem solving offers a process for resolution. The key to the entire helping relationship is to remember that you are trying to facilitate the speaker's understanding of his problem and himself so that in the future he will be able to apply to new situations what he has learned from this experience.

In the training pages ahead, our cast of characters (speakers, listeners, givers and receivers of feedback) will look like this:

. . .and like this

MODULE 4

SMALL GROUP INTRODUCTION AND NORM SETTING

ADDITIONAL SKILLS

The course offers *additional* counseling skills; it is not a dogma or catechism of counseling skills.

- The skills you already possess will still be effective when appropriately used. The *CT:STCS* course offers more skills—additional tools to draw upon; it does not necessarily replace other techniques, tools, etc.

- The most effective way for you to learn new tools is to set aside your old ones. Attempting to integrate new skills before they are completely understood and practiced often leads to confusion and frustration, and slows the learning process. Once the new skills are thoroughly acquired, integration can occur.

SKILL BUILDING

The course is designed to build counseling skills; it is not personal therapy for participants.

EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

The course for the most part is experiential.

- The training program is built on the premise that counselors will not learn to make more helpful, effective responses by simply *knowing* what should be done; they must also be able to do it. This practice will also give you a chance to experience your impact on others, and others' impact on you.

- Training aids include taped discrimination exercises, and videotapes for use during feedback (Interpersonal Process Recall).

SYSTEM OF LEARNING

The course is structured, *systematic and sequenced*. It follows a critical path that creates a *cumulative acquisition of skills in successive approximation* to the tasks required in the real work environment.

- The sequence of concepts presented in training is as follows:

  Listening

  Understanding

  Awareness of the bilateral nature of the counseling relationship

  Problem solving

- Each step must be completed before moving to the next; each skill is built upon the skill preceding it.

- The cumulative acquisition of skills allows time for evaluation of skill acquisition so that prerequisite skills can be identified and strengthened if necessary. Small steps are incorporated not only in the sequencing of concepts and skills, but also in the tasks required of the learner (successive approximation).

FEEDBACK IN THE SMALL GROUPS

Feedback is a way of helping another person or ourselves consider changing some aspect of behavior. It is a communication to a person that gives him information about his behavior and its effect on others. Feedback lets someone know whether or not his behavior is having the effect he intended; it tells him whether he is on target or not as he strives to achieve his goals. Good feedback can either confirm behavior by encouraging repetition, or correct it by encouraging a change in behavior to fit the situation.

Feedback is a message we get from others. It can be verbal or nonverbal, but it is always a signal—a smile, a clenched fist, a facial expression, a body posture, a mutter, a specific word—that tells us how we have affected others.

Feedback between you and your fellow group members in this training will be your most valuable learning tool. You need each other to learn. You are both t[illegible] and trainer—not only receiving feedback from other group members about your beh[illegible] and skills, but also giving it to them when it's appropriate. You are each other's re[illegible] people. Try to give feedback as often as appropriate and feel free to ask for feedback yourself.

Feedback can be helpful or destructive, useful or useless, depending upon how and when it is given. You will be more effective as a resource person if you learn and follow some general rules for giving helpful feedback. Remember that constructive feedback doesn't refer only to positive aspects of a person's behavior or to what we liked about something someone did. Good feedback covers both positive and negative qualities, things we liked and disliked, behavior a person may want to keep and behavior he may want to consider changing.

GUIDELINES FOR FEEDBACK IN THE SMALL GROUPS

1. Give feedback that is intended to help the receiver; do not "dump" or "unload" on someone just to have something to say.

WHAT NOT TO DO

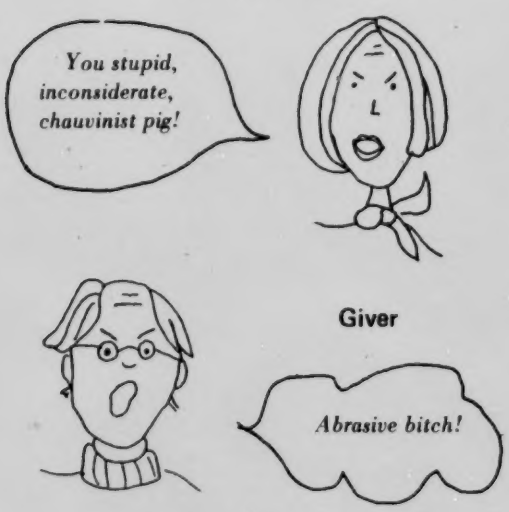
You know, my father used to frown like that and I just hate it! I always feel like I'm doing something wrong.
Giver
WOW
Receiver

WHAT TO DO

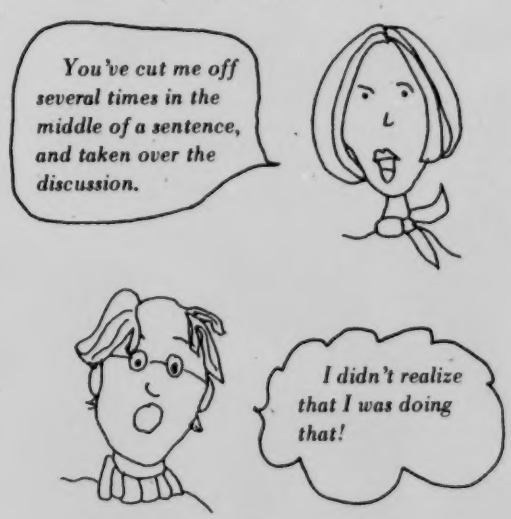
You tend to frown a lot when I'm speaking. I'm not sure if it's because you disagree with me or because you're not following what I'm saying.
I didn't even realize I was frowning. Let me see if I can tell you why.

2. Give feedback that describes what the person is doing; do not evaluate him as a person.

WHAT NOT TO DO



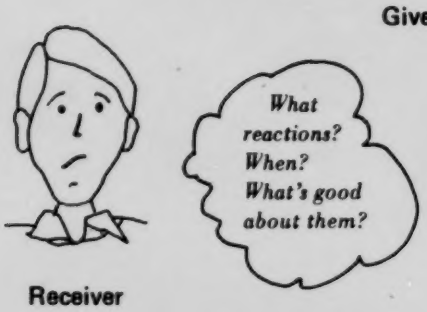
WHAT TO DO


You've cut me off several times in the middle of a sentence, and taken over the discussion.
I didn't realize that I was doing that!

3. Give feedback that is *specific*, with clear and recent examples; do not be vague or general.

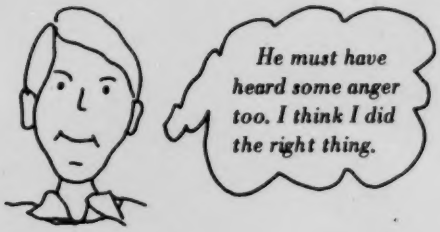
WHAT NOT TO DO

Giver



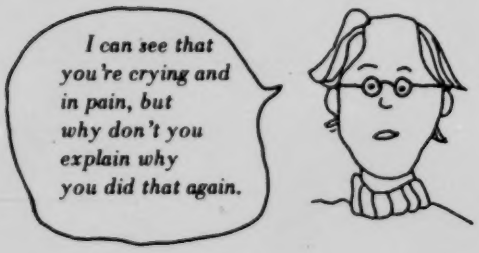
Receiver

WHAT TO DO

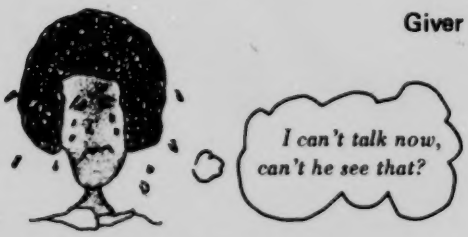


4. Give feedback that is *well-timed*, as soon after the behavior as possible; do not give feedback if the receiver doesn't seem ready to hear it.

WHAT NOT TO DO



Giver



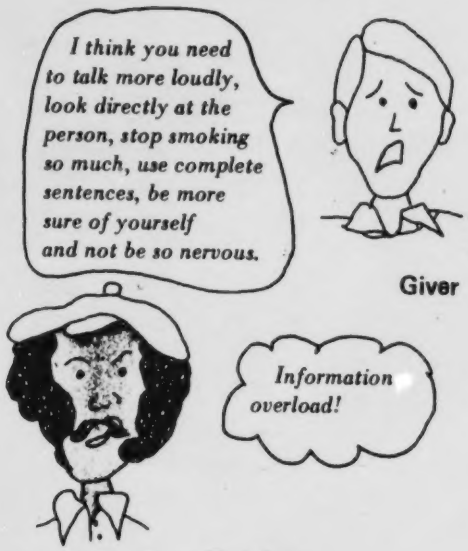
Receiver

WHAT TO DO

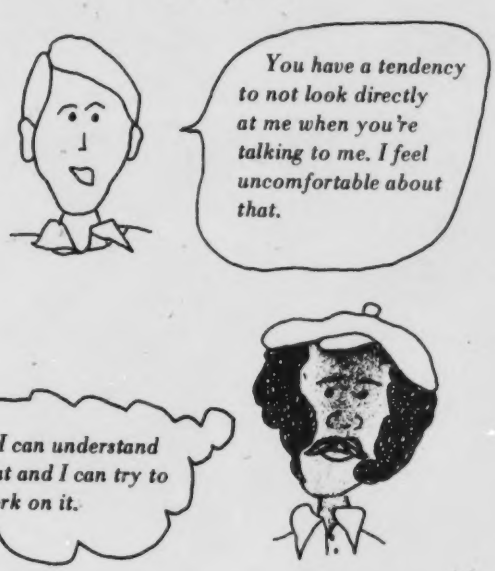
Wait until the receiver can hear or accept the feedback.

5. Give feedback in *appropriate doses*. Do not give more than the receiver can process at one time.

WHAT NOT TO DO


I think you need to talk more loudly, look directly at the person, stop smoking so much, use complete sentences, be more sure of yourself and not be so nervous.
Giver
Information overload!
Receiver

WHAT TO DO


You have a tendency to not look directly at me when you're talking to me. I feel uncomfortable about that.
I can understand that and I can try to work on it.

6. Give feedback that is directed toward behavior that the receiver can *reasonably* be expected to do something about.

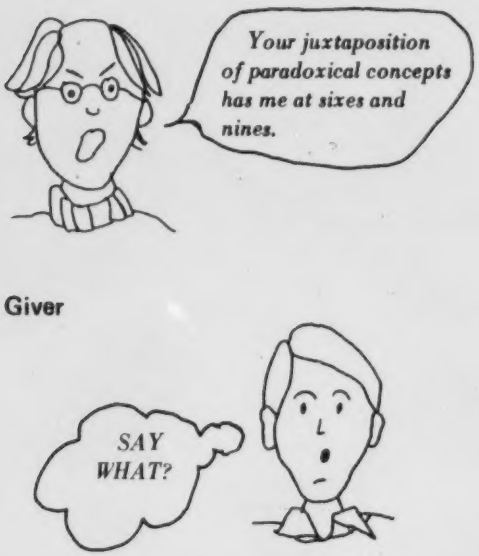
WHAT NOT TO DO

WHAT TO DO

You speak very softly and it is hard to hear you. Could you talk a little louder?
I can understand that and I can try to work on it.

7. Give feedback that can be *checked with the receiver* to ensure clear communication.

WHAT NOT TO DO



Giver

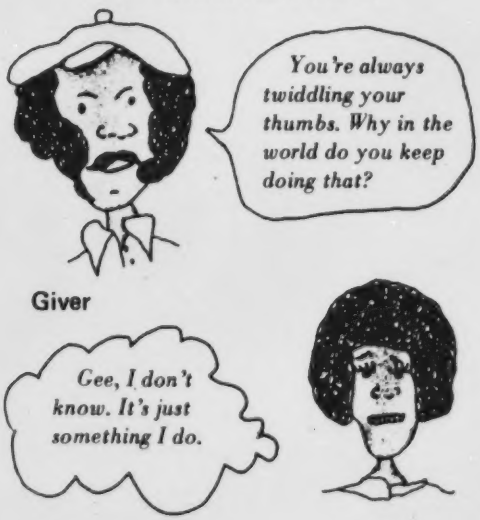
Receiver

WHAT TO DO

You tend to jump around from one idea to another and I'm having trouble following you. Could you paraphrase that for me so I know that you understand?
You say I skip around a lot and you can't follow me.

8. Give feedback describing the *effect* that the receiver's behavior has on you. *Avoid asking "why?"*

WHAT NOT TO DO



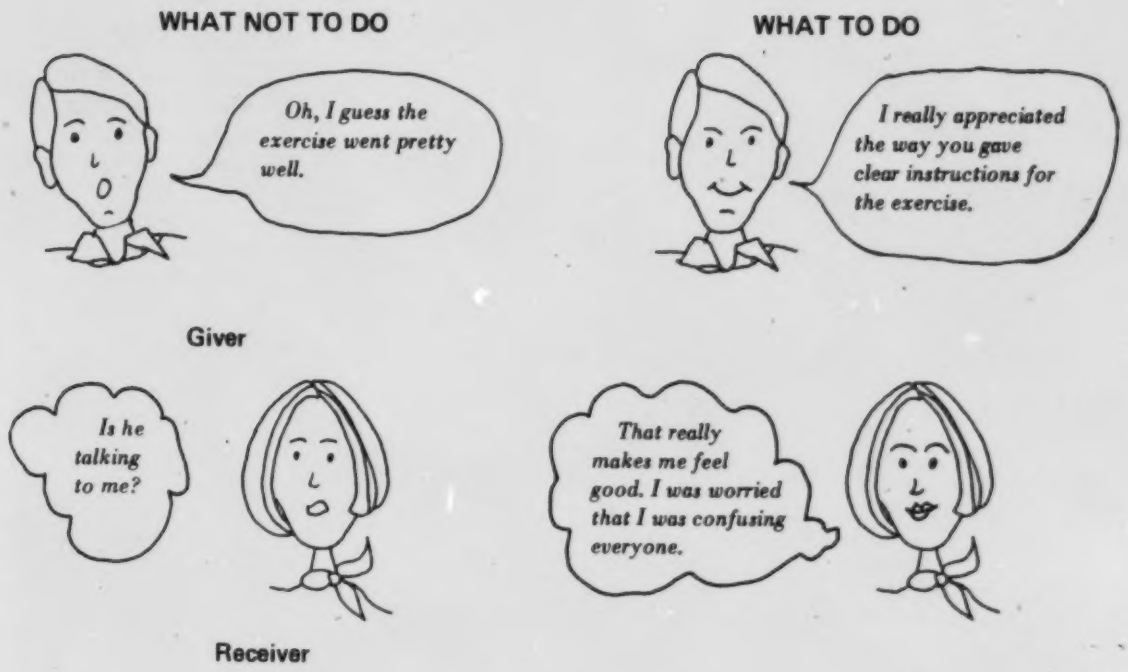
Giver

Receiver

WHAT TO DO

You're always twiddling your thumbs and I get distracted a lot by it.
Oh. I guess I do that out of nervousness. I'll try to be more aware of it.

9. Give feedback *directly* and with real feeling.


WHAT NOT TO DO
Oh, I guess the exercise went pretty well.
WHAT TO DO
I really appreciated the way you gave clear instructions for the exercise.
Giver
Is he talking to me?
That really makes me feel good. I was worried that I was confusing everyone.
Receiver

10. Give feedback that can be checked with the group for accuracy and validity.

This one is hard to draw. It means that you gather as many opinions as possible to help determine if the feedback is appropriate and useful.

UNIT II

EMPATHY

UNIT II

EMPATHY

INTRODUCTION

Unit II is designed to improve your ability to (1) listen and hear the message being communicated by a speaker (client); (2) understand that message in terms of both the stated and the implied feelings and the sources of those feelings; and (3) respond to the stated and implied feelings.

The unit also includes a module in which you will examine your own feelings when interacting with a client and explore how those feelings can both impede and facilitate the helping process.

Empathy skills will be imparted through a series of structured exercises and practiced in speaker/listener role plays.

There are seven modules in Unit II:

- Module 5: Definitions
- Module 6: Owning of Feelings
- Module 7: Responding to Feelings
- Module 8: Specific Labeling of Feelings and Sources
- Module 9: Responding to Feelings in Conflict
- Module 10: Owning of Listener Feelings
- Module 11: Interpersonal Process Recall

This unit will require about 18 hours to complete.

MODULE 5

DEFINITIONS

In this first section of the training program we will focus on one way people respond to the world they live in, namely with *feelings* or *affect*. Both words mean the same thing. In order to look at feelings, it is important that we define some of the concepts people often confuse with feelings, such as "situations," "symptoms," and "sources." Throughout this manual, terms will be defined as they are intended for use within this training model.

Definition 1 *Situations* are the events, settings, times, places, and people that make up an experience or story.

Definition 2 *Symptoms* are the physiological responses (i.e., things your body does) or behaviors that are your nonverbal reactions to a situation.

You smile.

You cry.

Your mouth hangs open.

Your stomach has butterflies.

Your heart beats hard.

Can you think of some more? (You don't have to draw them.) Share the list with your group and expand your own list from input made by other group members.

Definition 3

Feelings are the emotions that are experienced by us in a given situation, and that we describe with word labels.

Thus labeled, we have a feeling, and we can react to that feeling, understand it, examine it, and try to change it if we wish.

Situation:
You've just been given a present.

Symptom:
It makes you smile.

Feeling:
It makes you feel happy.

A few more feeling labels are: angry, sad, disappointed, excited. Can you think of others? Take time in your group to have each person make a list of "feeling" words. Put a plus (+) beside each positive feeling word and a minus (-) beside each negative word. Then share your list with your group. Make your list of "feeling" words (labels) here:

Now that we know about feelings, we can consider where they come from.

Definition 4 *Sources* are the concerns, situations, or persons that have stimulated the feeling.

Our feelings are a response or reaction to something in our experience. We don't just suddenly and for no reason have a feeling walking down the street; feelings have sources. It is just as important to recognize what those sources are as it is to know that we have feelings.

If you think you see a similarity between "sources" and "situations," you are right. Our feelings can be caused by (1) events, places, people, or other things outside ourselves, or (2) by something inside ourselves, such as physical discomfort or pleasure, fantasies, or even another feeling! Have you ever felt selfish and then felt guilty about feeling that way?

Let's look again at our happy friend and examine the source of her feelings.

Situation:
She has just been given a gift.

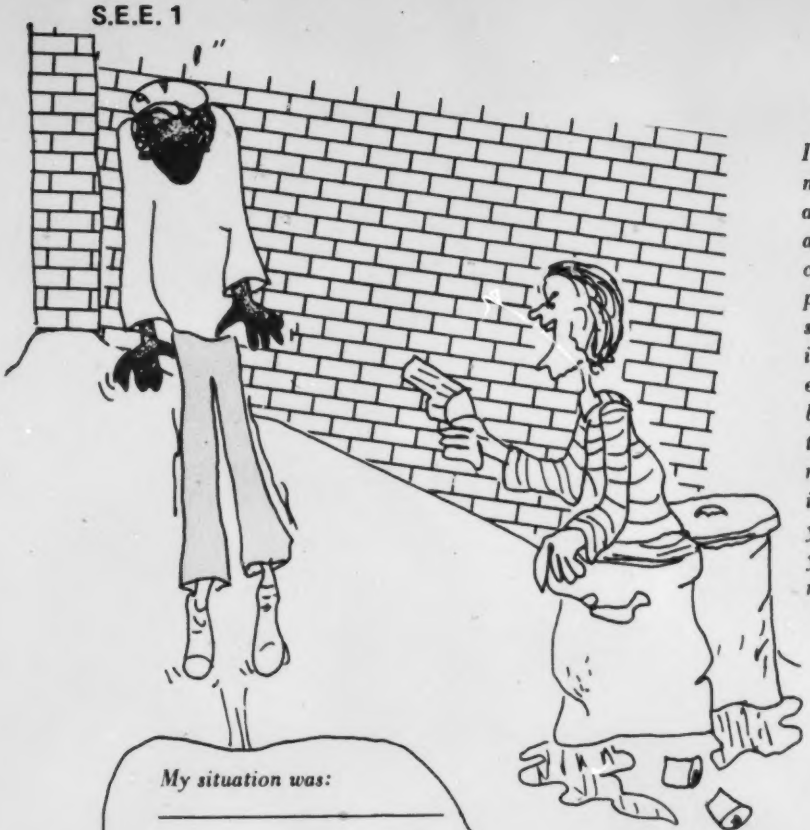
Symptom:
She smiles.

Feeling:
She feels happy.

Source:
Someone gave her a present.

The following Self-Examination Example (S.E.E.) may be used to check your understanding of the terms just defined (The answers that you give and the answers provided in this manual should be thought of as "appropriate" rather than "correct.")

S.E.E. 1



I was walking home last night and I decided to take a short cut through the alley. It was dark and cloudy, so I was walking pretty fast, when all of a sudden this guy popped out in front of me. Man, did I ever jump! My heart was beating away and I started to sweat. Then he said in a really mean voice, "Hold it right there! Hand me your wallet, or I'll blow your brains out!" I was really terrified.

My situation was:

My symptoms were:

I felt:

The source of my feelings was:

S.E.E. 1 ANSWERS

Situation:	nighttime, alley, robbery, etc.
Symptoms:	jumping, heart thumping, sweating, etc.
Feelings:	terrified, scared, frightened, etc.
Source:	being robbed, getting shot, fantasizing about being killed, etc.

S.E.E. 2

My girlfriend and I had a fight last night about her seeing other guys. I was trying to understand but my stomach was just tied in knots. There were a couple of times I thought I was gonna throw up. It felt like I was getting pulled in two directions at once. Part of me was really hurt by the thought of losing her and part of me was confused about what to do.

My situation was:

_____

_____

_____

_____

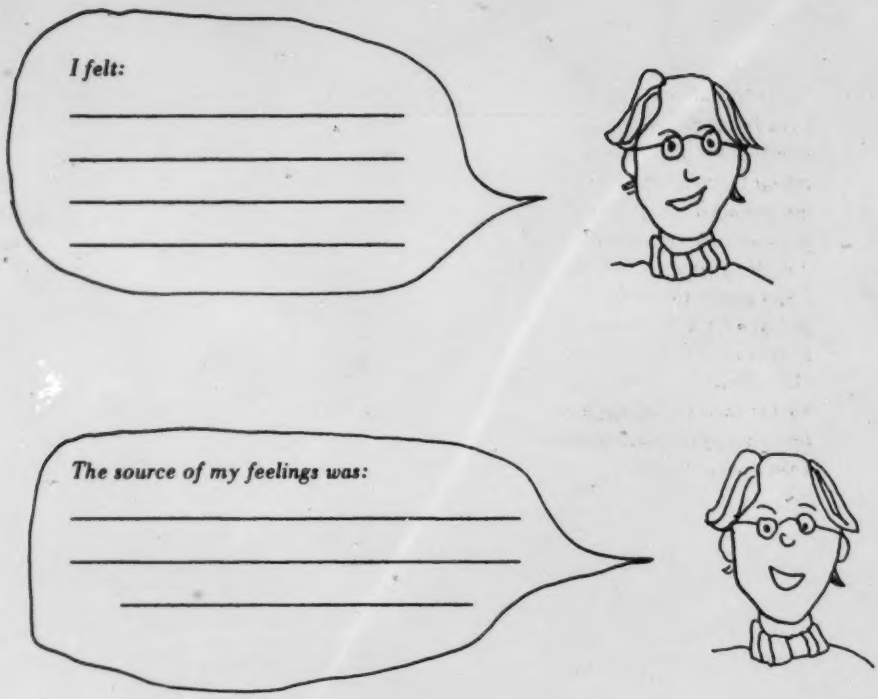
My symptoms were:

_____

_____

_____

_____



S.E.E. 2 ANSWERS

Situation:	my girlfriend told me she wants to date other guys
Symptoms:	stomach in knots, nauseous, being pulled two directions
Feelings:	hurt, confused, angry, rejected, worried, etc.
Source:	the idea of losing my girlfirend, wanting to understand and do the right thing

MODULE 6

OWNING OF FEELINGS

The first step in the helping relationship is to help the speaker clarify and explore how he feels about his problem. We have already discussed how feelings are interwoven with our total experience—feelings affect behavior and are, in turn, affected by the situations in which we find ourselves. If a person comes to you for help, it is probably because he is having a problem and is experiencing some generally bad feelings about it. Helping him understand his feelings and how they are connected to his problem will eventually give him the freedom to make decisions that will make him feel better. In order to accomplish this first step, the helper must "tune in" well enough to the speaker's communication to be able to sort out the meaning from the story, the feelings from the facts. The helper must learn to be a true *listener*.

There's another important reason for learning to listen for the speaker's expression of feelings. The listener can't begin to help a speaker understand, sort out, and deal with his feelings if the speaker doesn't know he's experiencing feelings, or even denies having feelings at all. Your first real task as a listener may be to help the speaker to recognize and then accept his feelings. On the other hand, if the speaker is already aware of his feelings and what is causing them, you won't have to spend lots of time helping him get in touch with what's going on. You can begin helping him clarify, explore, and understand his feelings.

Your first job as a listener during the *empathy* phase of the helping relationship is to listen carefully to the feelings that the speaker is expressing, in order to determine how well he is owning them. *Owning feelings* is the extent to which the speaker—

- **recognizes and expresses verbally (uses word labels for) his immediate feelings;**
- **describes where his feelings come from;**
- **accepts ownership and responsibility for his feelings.**

In order to assess how much a speaker is owning feelings, it is essential to have a clear idea of what it sounds like when someone *is* or *is not* owning feelings. Also, it's important to practice listening to the expression of feelings without thinking about solutions or advice or what to say next.

We think it will help to learn these skills through a training aid called a "scale." After reading the following scale and listening carefully to some taped examples of a speaker's statements, you should be able to determine which speaker will need the most help in getting in touch with his feelings.

OWNING-OF-FEELINGS SCALE

LEVEL ONE: The speaker does not own his own feelings by—

- *denying* his feelings or *avoiding* discussion of them;
- *detaching* himself from his feelings, and describing them as though they are not part of himself but come from outside himself, or are forced on him by other people or situations;
- *minimizing* feelings or talking about them in an abstract or superficial manner.

LEVEL TWO: The speaker attempts to own his feelings by—

- describing his feelings in a *vague* manner, or *distancing* them by using past or future terms;
- acknowledging his feelings but discussing them in an *intellectual* or *philosophical* manner;
- stating his feelings *without* clearly linking them to a *source*.

LEVEL THREE: The speaker owns and takes responsibility for his own feelings by—

- identifying his immediate (here and now) feelings *clearly* and *genuinely*;
- expressing the *intensity* of his feelings;
- specifying the *source* of his feelings.

Briefly,

Level 1 is "out there in the ozone."

Level 2 is a "head trip."

Level 3 is "gut level."

Now that you have studied the scale of feelings, try another self-examination example to check your understanding of this section.

S.E.E. 3

For each of these statements, check the appropriate level of owning of feelings.

Statement 1

My girlfriend and I broke up last week. We'd been going together for almost two years, and then she met some other guy. I think she was looking for kicks or something. I really don't care though. I'm not going to let it bother me.

Check one:

Level 1 _____

Level 2 _____

Level 3 _____

Statement 2

I'm really depressed about my girlfriend's breaking up with me last week. It hurt me a lot. She dropped me for another guy. I'm really angry at her for deserting me that way. It makes me feel like I'm inadequate.

Check one:

Level 1 _____

Level 2 _____

Level 3 _____

Statement 3

I was bummed last week over my girlfriend. We'd been pretty close for over two years, then she starts seeing someone else. But I suppose that breaking up, even though it hurt at the time, is better than staying with someone you'll always be fighting with.

Check one:

Level 1 _____

Level 2 _____

Level 3 _____

S.E.E. 3 ANSWERS

1. This is a Level One. The speaker denies having any feelings about his break-up, for example, "I really don't care though." He even detaches feelings further by saying, "I'm not going to let it bother me," as though his feelings were a salesman he could close the door on.

2. This is a Level Three. The speaker clearly identifies his here and now feelings; for example, he uses the feeling labels "hurt," "depressed," "angry," and "inadequate." He also specifies the source of his feelings, "my girlfriend's breaking up with me" and "deserting me that way."

3. This is a Level Two. The speaker describes his feelings vaguely ("bummed"), distances his feelings by saying "was bummed" and "it hurt at the time," and then intellectualizes his feelings by saying, "breaking up is better than staying with someone you'll always be fighting with."

Taped Exercise

Now, let's practice applying the Owning-of-Feelings Scale using the tape recorder. There's one slight difference. Instead of reading the examples, you will listen to them. You can derive a lot of information about the level at which a person is owning his feelings from listening to his voice. Is the voice happy, sad, loud, soft, halting, angry? Actually, an apology is in order, because when you're listening to a tape recorder, you can't look at the person who's talking, and consequently you miss a lot of nonverbal cues (facial expressions, gestures, body postures).

As you listen to the speaker, it will help you assess the owning-of-feelings level if you ask yourself some basic questions about what you have heard. Here is a checklist to use as a guide in your rating:

- What specific feelings did the speaker label?
- Are his feelings something that he sees as part of him, or are they "out there in the ozone"?
- Did the speaker deny feelings, or avoid talking about them?
- Is the speaker minimizing feelings by saying "sort of" or "a little"?
- Is the speaker owning his immediate feelings or is he putting them as far away as possible by talking about them in the past tense?
- What intensity do you hear in the speaker's tone of voice?
- Does the speaker relate his feelings to a source or are they free-floating?
- Does the speaker intellectualize or philosophize about his feelings?
- If the speaker is owning his feelings, are there any other feelings you can detect that aren't being specifically talked about?

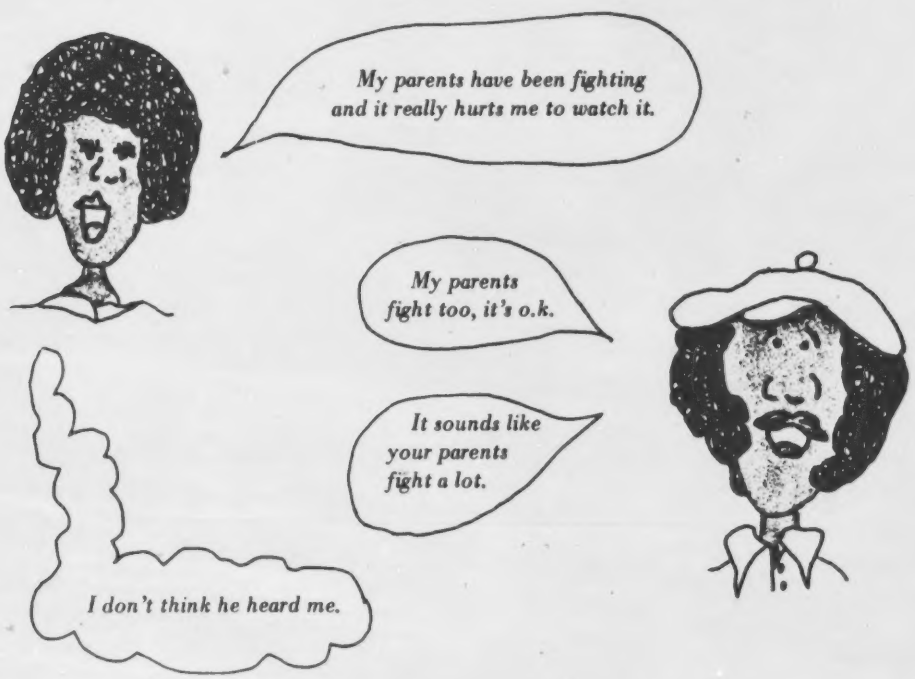
MODULE 7

RESPONDING TO FEELINGS

Now that you've learned and practiced the skill of listening to and understanding what a speaker is saying about his feelings, the next task is to learn how to respond to a speaker's feelings. Remember what was said earlier: *"It is of little use to understand unless you communicate that understanding."*

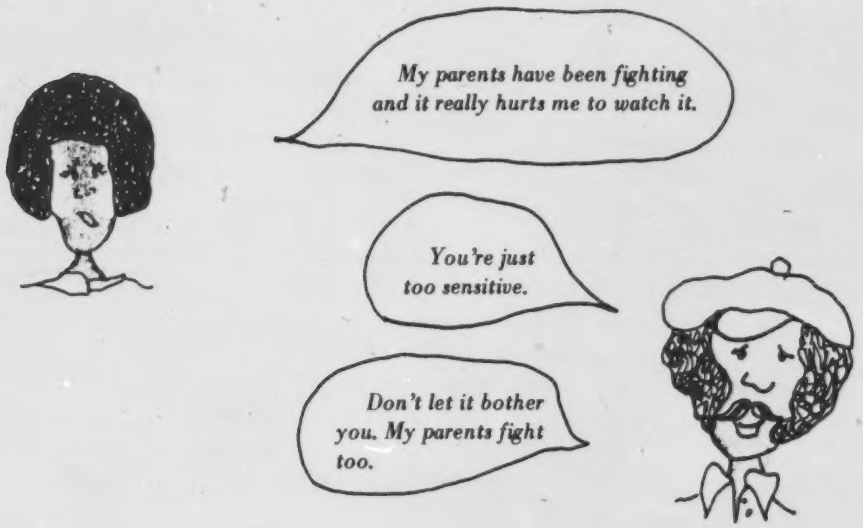
The first skill to master is discrimination between a listener statement that responds to the speaker's feelings and (1) a listener statement that responds to situational information or facts, (2) a listener statement that is judgmental, and (3) a listener statement that suggests a solution to the speaker's problem.

Definition 5 A *situational response* is any response that responds only to the facts or story of the speaker's situation and ignores the feelings that the speaker is expressing.


My parents have been fighting and it really hurts me to watch it.
My parents fight too, it's o.k.
It sounds like your parents fight a lot.
I don't think he heard me.

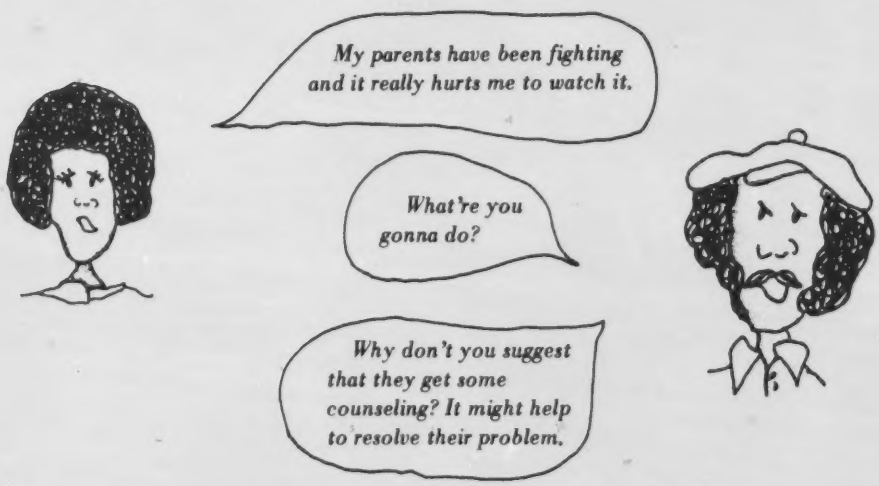
In the first response, the listener responds to his own situation, without even considering the speaker's statement. In the second response, he responds only to the speaker's situation.

Definition 6 A *judgmental response* is any response that agrees or disagrees with the speaker's feelings, or criticizes the speaker because of his feelings.


My parents have been fighting and it really hurts me to watch it.
You're just too sensitive.
Don't let it bother you. My parents fight too.

In both his responses, the listener criticizes the speaker for having her feelings, as though she's wrong to feel hurt by seeing her parents fight.

Definition 7 A *solution response* is any response in which the listener (1) advises the speaker what to do about his problem, or (2) seeks information from the speaker about what he thinks he should do.


My parents have been fighting and it really hurts me to watch it.
What're you gonna do?
Why don't you suggest that they get some counseling? It might help to resolve their problem.

Both of the listener's responses are solution-oriented. He is looking ahead to some resolution of the speaker's problem, but is missing her immediate pain.

Solution alternatives are part of the problem-solving process, which will be covered later in this manual. Solution-oriented responses are inappropriate now since they do not respond to feelings. Besides, a listener who comes up with a quick solution at this point in the helping relationship may not even be addressing the real issue and may prevent the speaker from reaching it!

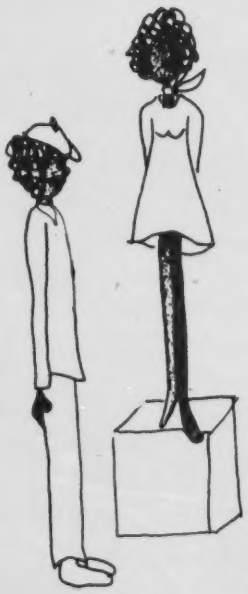
If you want to, go back to Definition 3 and your list of feeling words. It is the *feelings* a speaker presents that are of interest to us in this skill, and it is the listener's response to those feelings that we are now going to concentrate on.

Your primary objective as a listener at this stage is to communicate to the speaker that you heard his feelings, understand them, and accept them. You should communicate in a way that allows the speaker to *own* his feelings: that is, accept them as valid, understand them, and deal with them.

Definition 8

A *sympathetic response* is a response in which the listener communicates to the speaker that he feels sorry for him. A response that says "Aw gee, that's too bad," implies that the speaker cannot do anything about his situation, and that the listener is somehow above the speaker.

NOTE: This is *not* a helpful response: it does not facilitate the speaker's understanding of and dealing with his feelings.



Defintion 9 An *empathic response* is a response in which the listener communicates to the speaker that he understands, accepts, and can relate to the speaker's feelings. Responding in this way places the listener and the speaker in equal, sharing roles.

NOTE: This *is* a helpful response: it facilitates the speaker's understanding of and dealing with his feelings, and also helps to build trust. The speaker knows the listener cares about his feelings.

Definition 10 *Responding to feelings* is the process whereby the listener hears the speaker's feelings and gives them back in a positive reflective statement that lets the speaker know that the listener has heard his feelings. He "mirrors" what he has heard.

My parents have been fighting and it really hurts me to watch it. I can't seem to do anything to help.
It sounds like you feel hurt.
I hear you saying you're hurt, but I also get the feeling you're pretty frustrated.

Both responses are positive reflective statements.

1. Positive reflective statements can bring the speaker's vaguely expressed feelings into clearer focus. They can even help the speaker's owning of feelings by enabling him to hear the feelings he has expressed and to recognize them as his own.

2. Some ways of starting a positive reflective statement are: "I hear your. . .," "I hear you saying. . .," "It sounds like you. . .," "What I'm hearing is. . .," "You sound. . .," etc.

3. Note that the listener could have said, "That must be painful for you,"—showing he has really *heard* her by being able to match "hurt" with another label.

In the first response, the listener has mirrored the speaker's feeling label "hurt." In the second, he is also picking up a feeling the speaker is not stating with specific labels, but is implying—"frustration."

Definition 11 — *Undercurrents* are emotions the speaker may be experiencing that he has not yet actually owned—feelings that are still rumbling around in the speaker beneath the surface that he has not yet labeled or even discovered.

In the last example, the second response labeled an undercurrent feeling. Can you go back and find the feeling that fits this description? Being able to detect undercurrents and communicate them back to the speaker is a very useful and facilitative tool. The listener is responding to the total communication of the speaker: what is said and what is implied. It helps the speaker to examine his feelings more clearly and closely. Reflecting undercurrents can also help a speaker who isn't owning his feelings, or who is having trouble doing so.

You can get clues as to what labels to put on these undercurrents by—

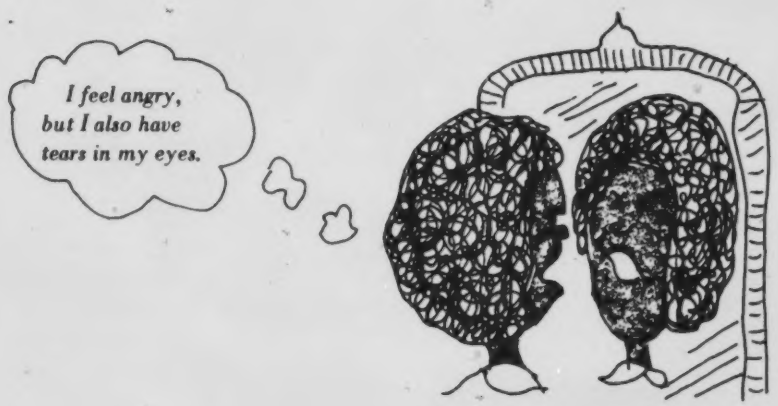
1. imagining yourself in the speaker's position and trying to guess what he might be feeling;

2. trying to get a picture of what he is describing and then labeling with "feeling" words what he might be experiencing;

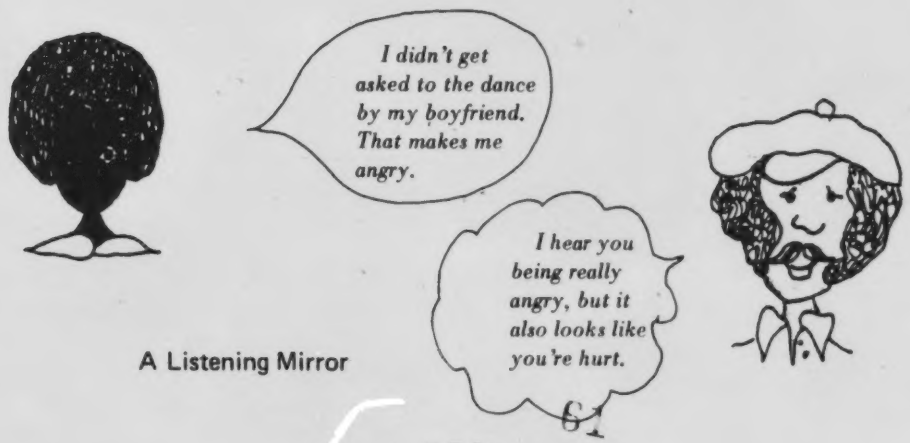
3. paying attention to nonverbal cues and putting labels on those emotions the speaker is showing you but not talking about.

CAUTION: Remember that you as a listener are trying to help the speaker talk about what he is feeling. It is *not* your job to tell the speaker what he should feel, or to tell him what you would feel if you were in his position. Nothing turns a speaker off more quickly than having his own, true feelings taken away from him, or having feelings that aren't his forced on him. When you respond to undercurrent feelings, your positive reflective statement should be clearly tentative to allow the speaker to own or discover those undercurrent feelings. Some ways of checking out undercurrents are to say "I wonder if you're also feeling. . .," "I'm also picking up some. . .," "It seems like there also may be. . .," etc.

Maybe a story will be more helpful. You know how sometimes you walk up to a mirror and look at yourself and say, "Is that really me?" For sure it is. The mirror can't make anything up; it can just reflect what is there. Well, a good listener is like a good mirror. In fact, a good listener is better, because he can give you objective verbal feedback too.



A Regular Mirror


I didn't get asked to the dance by my boyfriend. That makes me angry.
I hear you being really angry, but it also looks like you're hurt.

A Listening Mirror

Now that you have had all these definitions, more pictures and more wordy explanations, you should have a strong enough foundation to understand the *Responding-to-Feelings (R.T.F.) Scale.*

RESPONDING-TO-FEELINGS SCALE

LEVEL ONE: The listener does not facilitate the speaker by—

- *denying* speaker's feelings, putting them down, ridiculing, *judging*, or offering quick *solutions*;
- responding only to the *facts*, the situation, or the storyline;
- *ignoring* the speaker's *feelings*.

LEVEL TWO: The listener facilitates the speaker by—

- *reflecting* the stated feelings of the speaker, using the same or similar words;
- maintaining nonverbal behavior that is *attentive* to the speaker;
- *accepting* the speaker's feelings by being nonjudgmental.

LEVEL THREE: The listener facilitates the speaker by—

- responding to stated feelings and to *undercurrent* feelings that the speaker has implied but has not clearly stated;
- acknowledging the *intensity* of the speaker's feelings with appropriate nonverbal behavior;
- responding to *nonverbal* cues from the speaker.

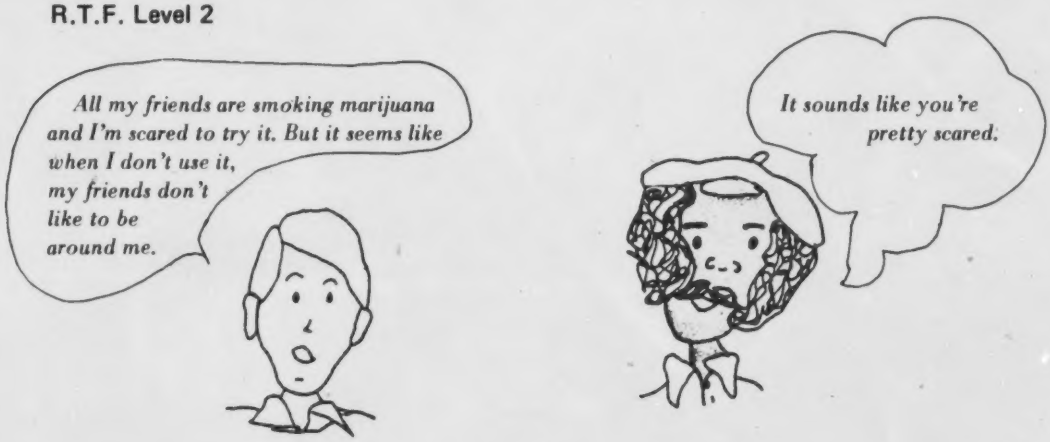
The examples below should help you learn how to rate the different levels in the Responding-to-Feelings Scale.

R.T.F. Level 1

All my friends are smoking marijuana and I'm scared to try it. But it seems like when I don't use it, my friends don't like to be around me.
Well, ya know, it's not a dangerous drug. Why don't you use it?

This listener is responding at a Level One. He has not recognized any feelings the speaker stated, but instead, he has responded to the situation. He also gave the speaker advice as a quick solution. Most likely, the speaker would be turned off.

R.T.F. Level 2


All my friends are smoking marijuana and I'm scared to try it. But it seems like when I don't use it, my friends don't like to be around me.
It sounds like you're pretty scared.

This listener is responding at a Level Two. He has *reflected* (remember the mirror) the stated feeling of the speaker (scared) and done so in a nonjudgmental way. (**Note:** The opposite of nonjudgmental is judgmental. An example of a judgmental response is: "You're pretty dumb to be that scared." This is *not* a helpful response; it is a punishing response.)

R.T.F. Level 3

All my friends are smoking marijuana and I'm scared to try it. But it seems like when I don't use it, my friends don't like to be around me.
It sounds like you're scared, but I also hear you being pretty lonely now.

This listener is responding at a Level Three. He has responded to the speaker's stated feelings (scared) and labeled additional *implicit* feelings (undercurrents going on in the speaker that he hasn't labeled) in the speaker's statement (loneliness).

Taped Exercise

You are ready now to practice applying the Responding-to-Feelings Scale. Listen to the examples on the tape recorder. You will hear a speaker presenting a problem. This will be followed by three separate listener responses that you will be asked to rate according to the R.T.F. Scale. You will repeat this process twice, and then you will be asked to make your own response to some prerecorded speaker statements.

S.E.E. 4 (optional)

This is an extra practice for people who would like to reevaluate themselves on their discrimination when responding to feelings. If you don't need it, skip it.

The following presents a speaker's problem and the three responses demonstrating different levels of responding to the speaker's feelings.

Wow, I'm really uptight. I've been going with this girl for six months and I want to break off the relationship but I just don't know how. I'm really confused and when I tried to talk to my old man about it, he just shook his head and turned on the T.V.

Fill in these blanks before going on to the responses:

1. The speaker's *situation* is _____.

2. The speaker's *stated* feelings are—

   a. _____

   b. _____

3. The speaker's *implied* feelings (undercurrents) are—

   a. _____ c. _____

   b. _____ d. _____

4. Response A:

Which of the following answers describes this response? The listener—

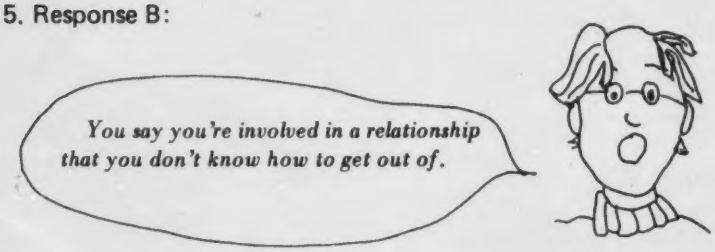
a. responds to stated feelings of the speaker, mirroring the same words with similar words;

b. denies speaker's feelings by putting speaker down, giving advice, ridiculing or coming up with quick solutions;

c. accepts the speaker's feelings (doesn't state or imply that the speaker has the *wrong* feelings or that the feelings are unimportant);

d. both a. and c.

5. Response B:



Which of these answers describes this response? The listener—

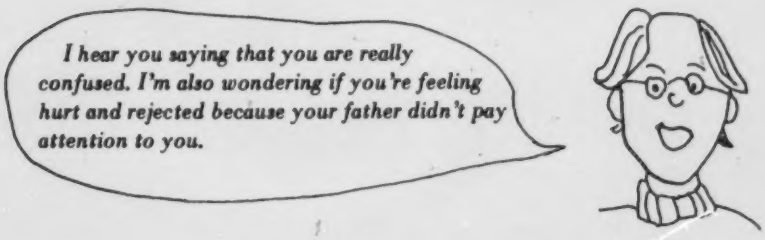
a. doesn't respond to speaker's feelings;

b. gives quick solutions;

c. responds to facts and information;

d. all of the above.

6. Response C:


I hear you saying that you are really confused. I'm also wondering if you're feeling hurt and rejected because your father didn't pay attention to you.

On what level is Response C? The listener—

a. denies speaker's feelings by coming up with a quick solution;

b. responds only to the storyline and ignores stated feelings;

c. responds to the speaker's stated feelings, and picks up some undercurrents, "hurt and rejected."

S.E.E. 4 ANSWERS

1. not knowing how to break off with his girlfriend and being ignored by his father

2. (a.) uptight

   (b.) confused

3. afraid, anxious, rejected, lonely, helpless

4. (b.) The listener comes up with a quick solution.

5. (c.) The listener responds only to the speaker's situation.

6. (c.) The listener responds to the speaker's stated feeling (confused) and picks up on undercurrent feelings of hurt and rejection.

MODULE 8

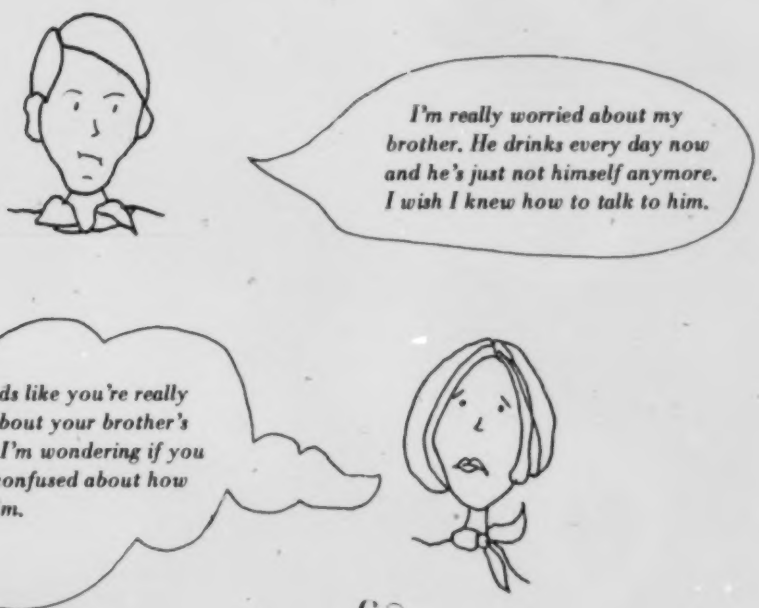
SPECIFIC LABELING OF FEELINGS AND SOURCES

In the module entitled "Responding to Feelings," we likened a good listener to a good mirror, reflecting the speaker's feelings so that he can recognize, understand and begin to deal with them. In this module, you will learn skills to help polish that "listening mirror" well enough to give the speaker an even clearer reflection of his feelings. By focusing on the speaker's feelings that are most important to his immediate concern, using specific language, and linking the feelings to their source, your response will help the speaker sort out and clarify his feelings and identify exactly where they come from.

There are three parts to this skill: (1) responding to sources of feelings; (2) specifically labeling feelings and sources; and (3) focusing on feelings most important to the speaker; we'll take them one at a time.

Definition 12 *Responding to sources of feelings* means responding to the concern, situation, or people that have stimulated the speaker's feelings.

Remember that one of the gauges indicating how clearly the speaker owns his feelings is whether he identifies the source of his feelings. As a listener, your task will be to respond not only to the speaker's feelings but also to their source.


I'm really worried about my brother. He drinks every day now and he's just not himself anymore. I wish I knew how to talk to him.
It sounds like you're really worried about your brother's drinking. I'm wondering if you also feel confused about how to help him.

The listener has correctly reflected the speaker's worry about his brother's drinking so much. Notice too that the listener picked up on an undercurrent feeling ("confused") and tied it to a source ("how to help him"). Reflecting undercurrent feelings is even more helpful if you can include the source in your response.

Definition 13 *Specific labeling of feelings and sources* means responding to the speaker's feelings and sources using language that is precise, clear, and specific—not vague, abstract, and general.

This helps the listener to bring the speaker's vague descriptions into clearer focus.

I'm really bummed about my grades. I guess I can just write off college.
It sounds like you feel kind of bad about that.
It sounds like you feel really disappointed about getting poor grades and worried that you might not get accepted to college.

In his first response, the listener labeled the speaker's feeling and source with the general, vague words "bad" and "that." He even said "kind of" when the speaker owned the intensity of her feeling by saying "really."

In the second response, the listener has used specific labels (disappointed, worried) to reflect back the speaker's vague feeling ("bummed") and has used specific language to respond to the source.

Here are some good examples of both abstract and specific words:

Vague, abstract, general	Specific
blah	frustrated
bummed out	disappointed
hassled	angry
bad	lonely
upset	worthless
good	excited

Can you think of more?

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

There is a *DO NOT* in the specific labeling. *DO NOT* say: "kind of, a little, sort of. . . ." These words minimize the feeling you are labeling, and therefore are not specific enough. (Question: Is your "kind of" the same as what another person means by "kind of. . .?" Be especially careful not to combine these words with feeling words that are not specific.

HELPFUL HINT: Some feelings can be labeled by different words that mean almost the same thing but that vary in degree (intensity). We call these related words a continuum. For instance, consider *angry* and *sad*.

ANGRY. . . . . annoyed – irritated – disgusted – furious

SAD. . . . . dejected – melancholy – depressed – despondent

Can you think of others?

_____ . . . . . _____ _____ _____ _____

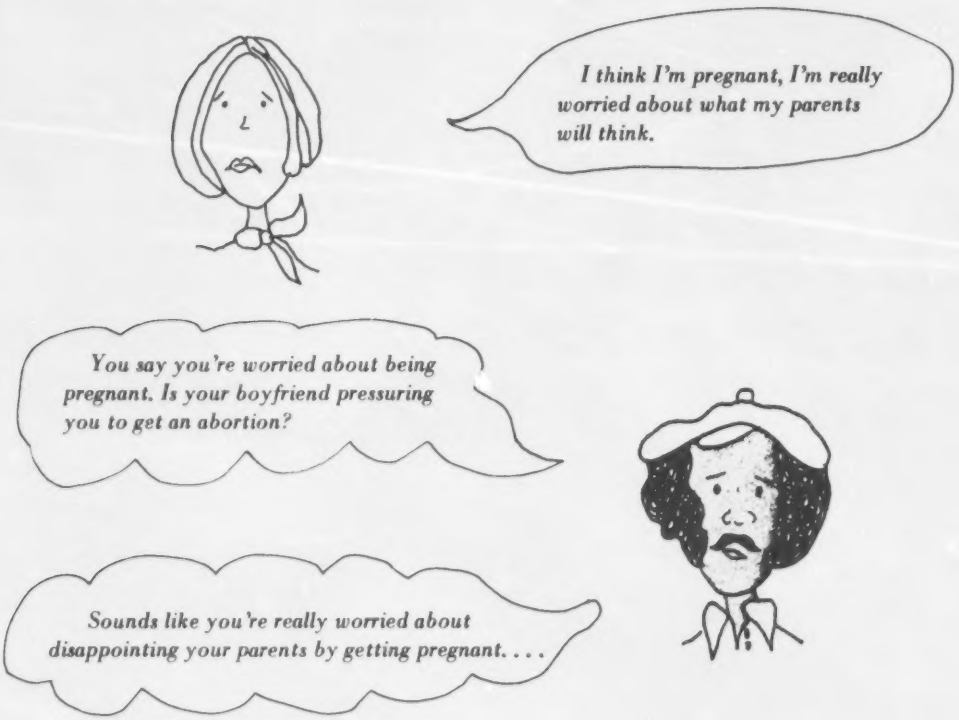
_____ . . . . . _____ _____ _____ _____

_____ . . . . . _____ _____ _____ _____

If you can learn a larger vocabulary of feeling words, most likely your specific labeling will improve.

Definition 14 *Focusing* is concentrating on those feelings and sources that are most important to the speaker's immediate (here and now) concern.

Obviously, you, as listener, won't help the speaker if you respond in a way that moves him away from his immediate concerns to other topics that have no bearing on his personal feelings. At other times, the speaker may describe several feelings and sources in the same statement. You will be very helpful to him if your response focuses on those feelings that are *most* important to his immediate concern.


I think I'm pregnant, I'm really worried about what my parents will think.
You say you're worried about being pregnant. Is your boyfriend pressuring you to get an abortion?
Sounds like you're really worried about disappointing your parents by getting pregnant. . . .

In his first response, the listener responds to the speaker's feelings, but tries to move to a topic that is irrelevant to what the speaker is saying about her parents. In the second response, the listener focuses on those feelings and sources that sound most important to the speaker's immediate concern ("worried about disappointing your parents").

S.E.E. 5

In the listener's response, underline with one line the specific label, and with two lines the source.

YOU'RE FIRED!
Man, I don't know what my wife is gonna say about this. . . . I just got fired for being late again. I'm really upset. I'm chicken to go home.
You say you really feel anxious about telling your wife you got fired and worried that she'll be disappointed in you.

S.E.E. 5 ANSWERS

You should have underlined "anxious" and "worried" for the specific labeling of feelings and placed two lines under "telling your wife you got fired" and "she'll be disappointed in you."

Look now at the Specific-Labeling-of-Feelings-and-Sources Scale.

SPECIFIC-LABELING-OF-FEELINGS-AND-SOURCES SCALE

LEVEL ONE: The listener does not facilitate the speaker by—

- responding to the speaker's stated feelings but *ignoring* the *sources* of those feelings;
- *moving* the speaker away from his immediate concerns to *irrelevant*, *impersonal*, or *abstract* issues;
- responding to speaker's stated feelings and sources in language that is *less specific* than the language that the speaker used.

LEVEL TWO: The listener facilitates the speaker by—

- responding to the speaker's stated feelings but matching it to an incorrect or *inappropriate source*;
- *reflecting* the stated feelings and sources of the speaker using the same or similar words;
- *centering* on the speaker's immediate concern.

LEVEL THREE: The listener facilitates the speaker by—

- responding to the speaker's feelings and sources in language that is *more specific* than the language that the speaker used;
- *focusing* on those feelings and sources that are most important to the speaker's immediate concerns;
- responding to *stated* feelings, to *undercurrent* feelings, and to the sources of those feelings.

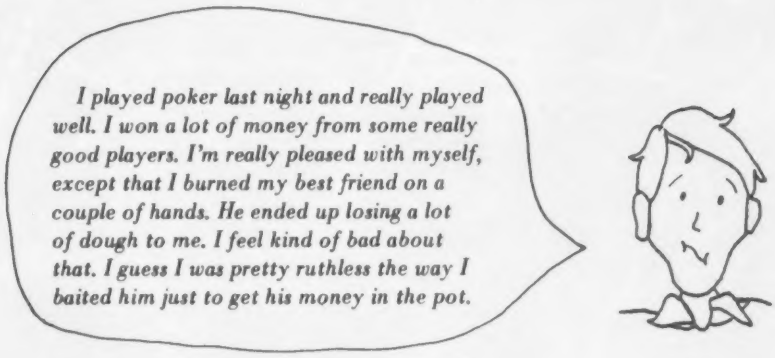
IMPORTANT REMINDER: **The levels on this scale are *NOT* the same as the levels on the Responding-to-Feelings Scale. In this scale, if only the speaker's feelings are labeled, the listener is at a Level One. He must *also* label the *sources* in order to be at a Level Two. In order to be at Level Three, the listener must specifically label the feelings, match them with the appropriate sources, and respond to undercurrent feelings and sources.**

Taped Exercise

Listen to the tape recorder. You will hear a speaker presenting a concern, and then three ways a listener might respond. Make sure you understand the example before you move on. After four sets of practice ratings according to the Specific-Labeling-of-Feelings-and-Sources Scale, you will be asked to write your own responses to some prerecorded speaker statements.

S.E.E. 6

If you're still confused, try this; if not, skip it.


I played poker last night and really played well. I won a lot of money from some really good players. I'm really pleased with myself, except that I burned my best friend on a couple of hands. He ended up losing a lot of dough to me. I feel kind of bad about that. I guess I was pretty ruthless the way I baited him just to get his money in the pot.

Fill in the following before rating the responses:

1. What two feeling labels did the speaker use?

   a. _____

   b. _____

2. What are the sources for each of these feelings?

   a. _____

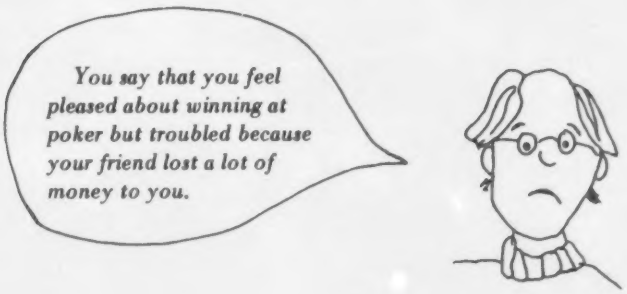
   b. _____

3. What were the feelings and sources most important to the speaker's concern?

   _____

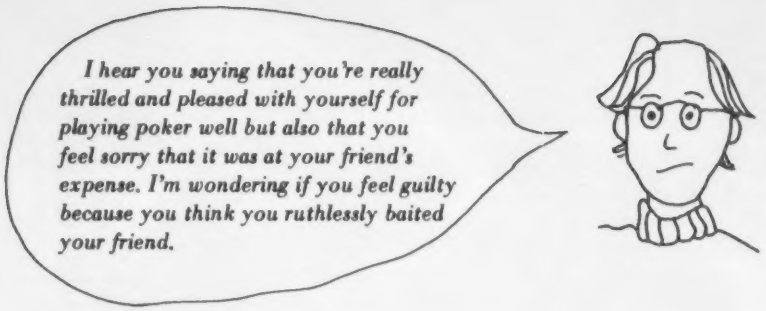
   _____

4. Response A:



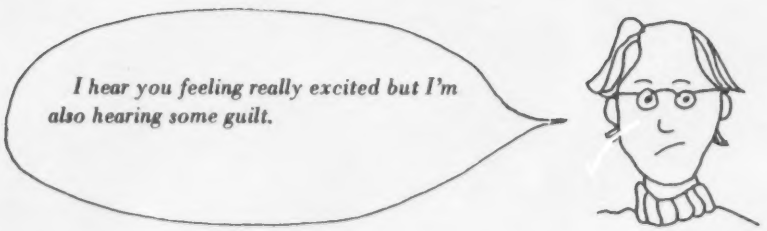
What level of responding is this? _____

5. Response B:


I hear you saying that you're really thrilled and pleased with yourself for playing poker well but also that you feel sorry that it was at your friend's expense. I'm wondering if you feel guilty because you think you ruthlessly baited your friend.

What level of responding is this? _____

6. Response C:



What level of responding is this? _____

S.E.E. 6 ANSWERS

1. (a.) really pleased

   (b.) kind of bad

2. (a.) playing well

   (b.) ruthlessly baiting his friend

3. feeling guilty for being ruthless

4. Level Two. The listener reflects the stated feelings and sources using words similar to those used by the speaker.

5. Level Three. The listener uses specific labeling to respond to the speaker's feelings ("thrilled," "pleased," "sorry") and sources ("playing poker well," "that it was at your friend's expense") and responds to an undercurrent feeling and source ("guilty because you ruthlessly baited your friend").

6. Level One. The listener specifically labels one of the speaker's stated feelings ("excited") and even picks up on an undercurrent ("guilt"), but does not respond to any sources of feelings.

MODULE 9

RESPONDING TO FEELINGS IN CONFLICT

By this time, you've learned a lot of skills to help the speaker own his feelings, clarify them, and understand where they come from. The job is not complete, however, until the speaker can explore his feelings more deeply and reach an even greater understanding of the effect of his feelings on each other and his total experience.

In our definition of sources we learned that situations in which we are involved are often the source of our feelings and that sometimes one feeling can cause another feeling. This often happens when a speaker is experiencing two or more conflicting feelings at the same time and about the same thing. For example, he may be excited and enthusiastic about a new job, but also unsure of himself and worried that he won't do well. These two simultaneous feelings also serve as the source for another set of feelings: confusion or indecision about taking that new job. Sometimes this additional feeling is the one that he is most aware of. Feelings of confusion, indecision, pressure, frustration, etc. can often be overwhelming and hinder the speaker's ability to sort out all the underlying reasons for these feelings. This complicates matters for him and makes it difficult for him to make decisions or change his behavior.

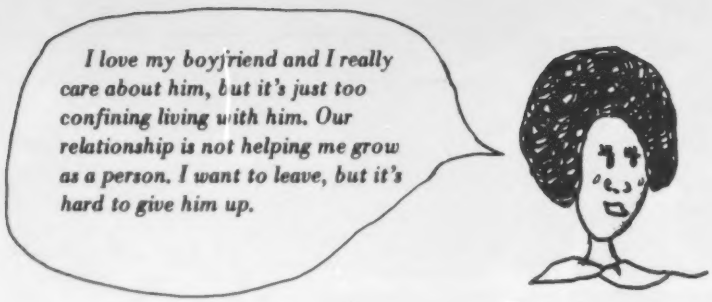
In this module, you will learn to refine your listening and responding skills in order to help the speaker deal with the problems created by his conflicting feelings.

There are three things to be aware of when dealing with a speaker who is experiencing a conflict of feelings: the situational conflict, the feelings arising from that situation, and the impact of the conflict on the speaker.

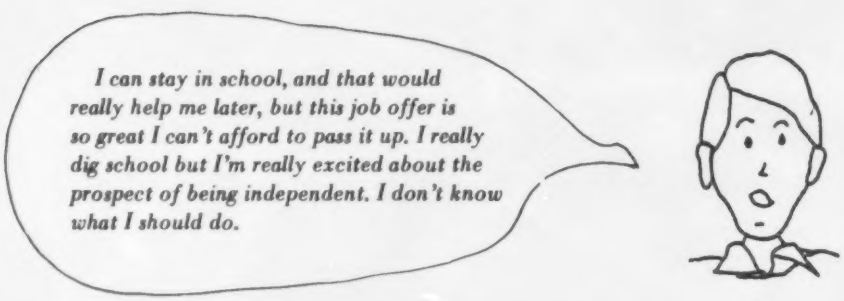
Example:

I want to quit my job, because I can't stand working for that S.O.B. any longer. I need to get out, but there's no place to go. I've looked around for jobs, but this town's dry. It gets me down to look for a job.

This speaker's *situational conflict* is that he wants to quit his job but doesn't know where to find another one.


I love my boyfriend and I really care about him, but it's just too confining living with him. Our relationship is not helping me grow as a person. I want to leave, but it's hard to give him up.

This speaker situational conflict is leaving her boyfriend or staying with him. Her *feelings in conflict* are loving and caring on the one hand but feeling confined on the other. (The sources of these feelings are loving her boyfriend and feeling confined by the relationship.)


I can stay in school, and that would really help me later, but this job offer is so great I can't afford to pass it up. I really dig school but I'm really excited about the prospect of being independent. I don't know what I should do.

This speaker's situational conflict is in choosing between staying in school or dropping out to take a job. His feelings in conflict are enthusiasm about school and excitement about taking the job. The immediate effect of this conflict is to create the additional feelings of *confusion* and being *torn*. (Note that enthusiasm and excitement are pleasant feelings when considered by themselves, but that the overall impact of both together is unpleasant.) An aid to recognizing when a speaker is experiencing feelings in conflict is the word "but." Look back at each of the examples and see if the speaker uses that word.

Let's look at another speaker and determine his situational conflict, the feelings that are in conflict, and the impact that his conflict has on his experience.

S.E.E. 7

I really feel up against the wall. My wife's been hassling me about my friend, Norm. He's my best friend and I really enjoy hanging out with him. But whenever I spend time with him, we stay out late drinking and carousing. My wife can't stand him though and she's starting to tell me to "choose him or me." I love my wife and it really bothers me that she's upset, I mean she's everything to me, but Norm, well, he's my partner. This is a real drag!

Fill in the following blanks:

1. Situational conflict: _____ vs. _____

2. Feelings in conflict: _____ vs. _____

3. Sources of feelings in conflict:

   _____ and _____

4. Immediate impact: _____

5. Can you pick up on any undercurrent feelings and sources that might be connected to the speaker's feelings in conflict? Can you detect any additional feelings in conflict?

   _____

   _____

S.E.E. 7 ANSWERS

1. Situational conflict: He wants to hang out with Norm but his wife tells him not to.

2. Feelings in conflict: Liking and enjoying Norm as opposed to loving but being bothered by his wife.

3. Sources of feelings in conflict: He spends time with Norm; his wife is upset.

4. Immediate impact: He feels up against the wall, pressured, unsure about what to do, torn between the two people.

5. Possible undercurrents and sources: Resentment and anger at his wife for pressuring him to choose between her and Norm; resentment toward his wife for not understanding his loyalty to Norm or his need to hang out with a good male friend; fear of damaging the relationship with either his wife or Norm; guilt over staying out late and upsetting his wife; confinement and frustration because his wife is impinging on his freedom; and worry that he's not being responsible to his marriage.

Whew! As you did this exercise you may have found that it was difficult to put the pieces of this feeling puzzle together. Imagine the confusion the speaker might be feeling in this situation. He knows that he feels "up against the wall" and that it's a "real drag." But he may not be in touch with or be able to sort out all the different feelings and the sources of those feelings that contribute to his dilemma. Study the following diagrams and see if it helps you to visualize feelings in conflict.

Speaker feels: *up against the wall*

torn, confused, unsure, conflicted, pressured*

because

on the one hand

he likes Norm and enjoys hanging out with him

FEELINGS IN CONFLICT

on the other hand

he loves his wife and is bothered that she is upset

Undercurrent Feelings and Sources**

guilt over upsetting wife

fear of damaging either relationship

anger at wife at pressuring him to choose

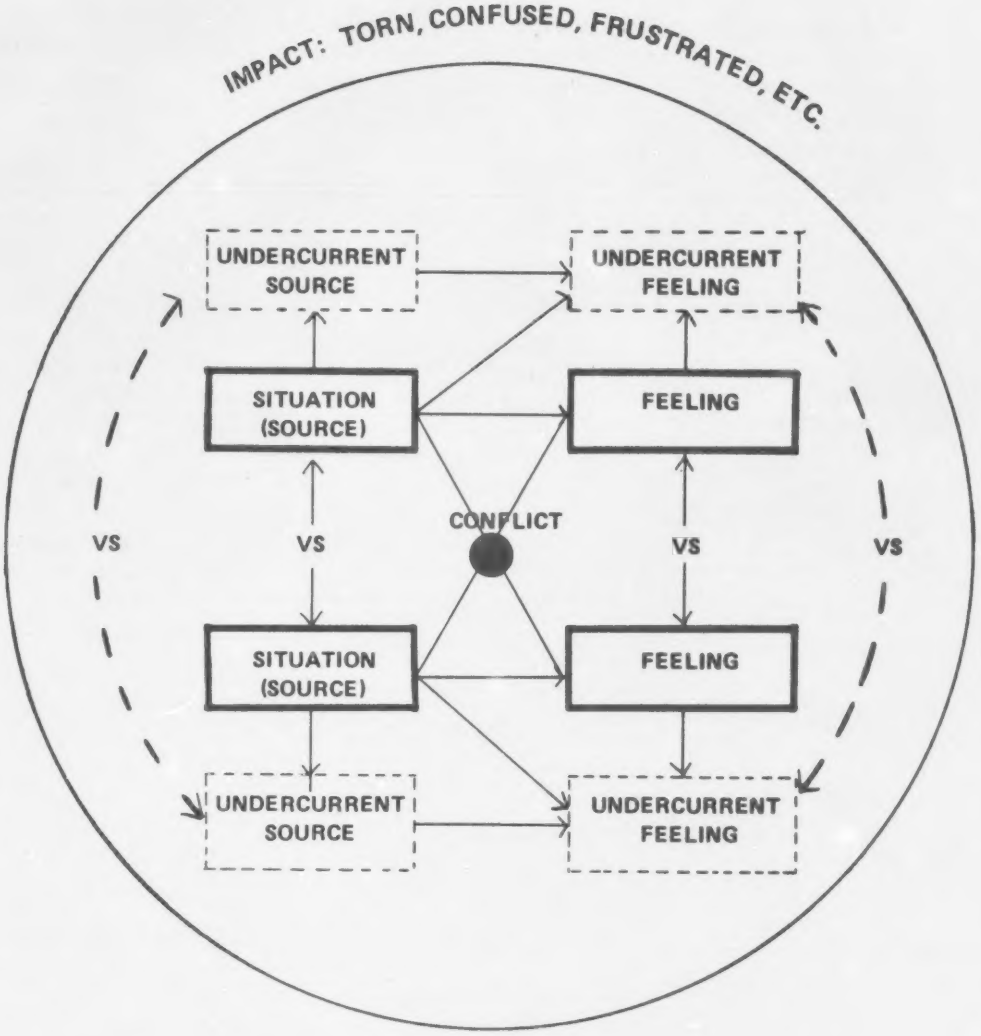
resentment at wife for not understanding his loyalty

confined and stifled in marriage

worried about being irresponsible in marriage

*These are common feeling labels used to describe ways a speaker might feel the impact of his conflict. Notice they are more specific labels than "up against the wall."

**Notice how many different layers of undercurrent feelings can contribute to, complicate, or develop from the speaker's dilemma. When responding to these undercurrents, remember that they are tentative. Check them out in a way that permits the speaker to own or disallow them.



Thus the entire situation creates—is the source for—the feelings of being torn, confused, frustrated, etc. Conflicting feelings can arise from one situation or source, or from two or more situations or sources.

Now look at the scale that describes ways to respond to the speaker's feelings in conflict. Remember that you will be most helpful to the speaker if you can make a response that helps him sort out and clarify his feelings in conflict, and understand the immediate impact of those feelings.

IMPORTANT REMINDER:

The levels on this scale are not the same as the levels on the Responding-to-Feelings and Specific-Labeling-of-Feelings-and-Sources scales. By this time you should have learned to respond to *feelings* and *sources*. In this scale however we are concerned with the more difficult task of responding to the speaker's *feelings in conflict*. If only one of the speaker's feelings and sources are labeled, the listener is at a Level One. He must at least respond to the speaker's feelings in conflict in order to be at a Level Two or above.

RESPONDING-TO-FEELINGS-IN-CONFLICT SCALE

LEVEL ONE: The listener does not facilitate the speaker by—

- acknowledging the speaker's feelings in conflict but *judging* one feeling to be more right or wrong than the other, taking sides, or giving advice;
- responding to *only one* of the speaker's feelings in conflict;
- recognizing the speaker's conflict but responding only to his *situational* conflict or generalizing to examples outside the speaker's personal world.

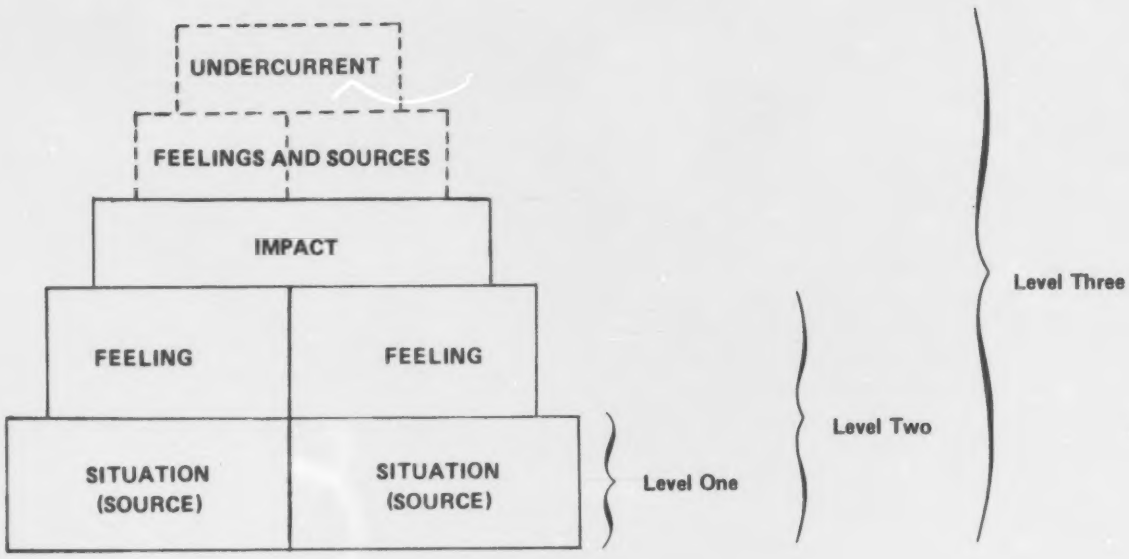
LEVEL TWO: The listener facilitates the speaker by—

- responding to the speaker's *feelings* in conflict but not to the source(s) of those feelings;
- *reflecting* the speaker's feelings and source(s) in conflict, using the same or similar words;
- *responding* to the speaker's feelings in conflict and their source(s) by using examples the speaker has described.

LEVEL THREE: The listener facilitates the speaker by—

- responding to the speaker's stated feelings in conflict and to the source(s) of those feelings using language that is *more specific* than the language used by the speaker;
- responding to the *impact* of the speaker's conflict;
- responding to *undercurrent feelings* and *source(s)* that the speaker implies but does not clearly state.

Another diagram may be helpful:



Level One: respond to situational conflict

Level Two: respond to situational conflict (source) and feelings in conflict

Level Three: respond to situational conflict, feelings in conflict, and impact of conflict *and* possibly check out undercurrents

Taped Exercise

Listen to the tape recorder again and rate listener responses according to the Responding-to-Feelings-in-Conflict Scale.

S.E.E. 8

Extra Practice: If you don't need it, skip it!

This scene is driving me crazy. It seems like the thing to do these days is to go to somebody's house, get drunk, do cocaine and then space out. We don't even seem to talk to each other. My friends love it and so does my husband. But we don't really have the money it takes to support that kind of play, and we'd sure be out of it if we ever got busted. What am I going to do? I don't even like what it's doing to me or my husband. He's losing weight and acting really strange and irritable more and more. It's like we're possessed. I'm afraid to say I want to stop going. My husband would hit the ceiling—or maybe he wouldn't, and I would just find myself sitting home alone.

1. Response A:

I can see you're in a bind, but I think you're really smart to consider the consequences of your actions. Many people struggle with the same problem: they like the high at first, then they start to worry about how dangerous cocaine can be.

What level of responding is this? _____

2. Response B:

It sounds like you really feel trapped. You're disappointed about the way you, your husband and your friends interact when you do coke and even scared about the consequences, but you feel afraid and uncertain about how to tell your husband. I also hear you feeling really vulnerable right now in your relationship with him.

What level of responding is this? _____

3. Response C:

On the one hand you're hassled by this scene but on the other hand you're afraid to do anything about it.

What level of responding is this? _____

S.E.E. 8 ANSWERS

1. Level One. The listener recognizes a conflict but doesn't respond to the feelings in conflict. He also judges by taking sides and agreeing with her, and generalizes to experiences outside the speaker's personal world ("Many people. . . .").

2. Level Three. The listener responds to the stated feelings and sources in conflict using more specific labels, responds to the impact the feelings in conflict have on the speaker, and checks out undercurrent feelings and sources that the speaker implies.

3. Level Two. The listener responds to the speaker's feelings and sources in conflict using the same or similar words.

MODULE 10

OWNING OF LISTENER FEELINGS

In all the skill building we have done so far we have been concentrating on your helping role as a listener. You have learned to focus on the speaker and what he is saying about his world—his feelings, sources of feelings, and feelings in conflict—in order to facilitate the speaker's clarification process. Now, we are going to focus on *your* feelings as a listener. Often, we overlook the fact that the listener also has feelings that enter into the helping relationship. Just as your responses have an impact on the speaker, what the speaker says sometimes has an effect on you.

RECOGNIZING LISTENER FEELINGS

You have probably experienced some different kinds of feelings as you have listened to the speakers so far. For example, did you ever "tune out" a speaker, find yourself not liking a speaker, or want to make the speaker feel better instead of reflecting his painful feelings? Each of those experiences could stem from feelings that were stimulated in you by something the speaker said.

The first step in owning listener feelings is to be able to recognize your feelings and understand where they come from. If this sounds familiar, you may recall the Owning-of-Feelings Scale, in which you learned to listen to a speaker owning his feelings. This process can give you added insight about the experience a speaker has when he is presenting a problem to you.

Taped Exercise

As practice in OLF we're going to ask you to close your eyes and pretend that the person on the tape recorder is talking directly to you. Try to get in touch with any feelings you may be experiencing and determine where they're coming from. After the tape recorded statement we will ask you to OLF (it might be helpful to review the Owning-of-Feeling Scale) and share your feelings with the group. Only by openly expressing your feelings and honestly exploring them will you get a good idea of how well you can own your feelings.

Remember that you don't have to feel a certain way. Each person may have different feelings stimulated by the same speaker. Also, right now you don't have to *do* anything with your feelings except own them. The following questions may help you in OLF.

What is the speaker saying?

What impact is the speaker having on me?

What am I thinking?

What am I feeling?

What kind of feeling labels can I put on those emotions?

What are the sources of those feelings?

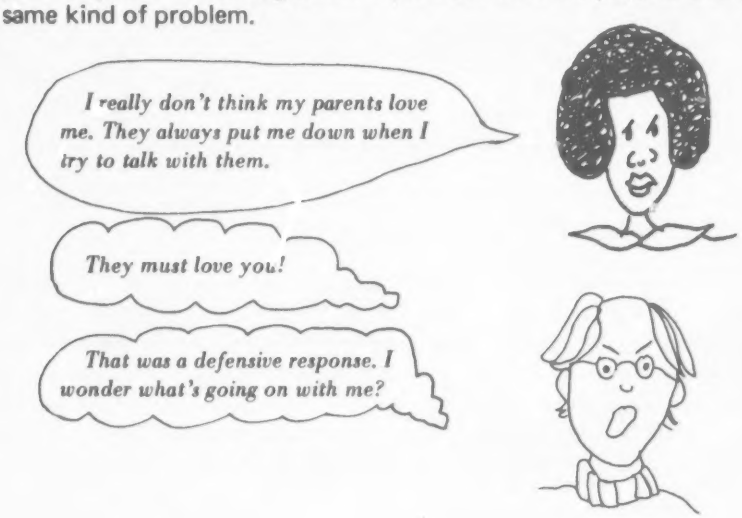
Have I ever felt that way before?

Do I want to say anything to the speaker?

LISTENER ROADBLOCKS

Now that you have had some practice in the first part of OLF—recognizing feelings and understanding where they come from—you're ready for the next step. When what a speaker is saying has an impact on you as a listener, it is sometimes difficult to keep listening, hear the speaker accurately, or respond effectively. We call this a listener *roadblock*.

Suppose a speaker is talking about a problem with his parents and you as a listener have the same kind of problem.


I really don't think my parents love me. They always put me down when I try to talk with them.
They must love you!
That was a defensive response. I wonder what's going on with me?

Do you think a listener roadblock caused this Level One defensive response?

By being able to recognize your feelings as a listener and the roadblocks they create, the response could go like this:

I really don't think my parents love me! They always put me down when I try to talk with them.
There are knots in my stomach. I wonder why?
Ah ha! Whenever anyone talks about his parents it reminds me that my parents do that and it HURTS!
It sounds like you really feel hurt when your parents don't listen to you.

Can you tell the difference? In the listener's first response, he wasn't able to get in touch with his feelings and become aware of his listener roadblock before he responded. In the second case, he was able to recognize his feelings (hurt and defensive), see the roadblock they created, and move around it. He listened to the rumbling in his stomach and then was able to respond to the *speaker's* feelings instead of his own.

S.E.E. 9

1. Sometimes as a listener your own feelings get in the way of hearing what is going on in a speaker. Put the following steps in the order that best describes how you as a listener can tune into what's happening to *you*, so that you can recognize your feelings and see where they come from.

   A. What are the sources of my feelings?

   B. What is the speaker saying to me?

   C. What impact is the speaker having on my emotions?

   D. What are the feeling labels that I am putting on those emotions?

   E. What do I want to say to the speaker?

2. Why is it good for me as a listener to be in touch with my own feelings? Is it so that I can–

   A. have an idea of the process that a speaker goes through when presenting a problem?

   B. take the focus off the speaker's problem and get into my own problem?

   C. keep my own problem from turning into a roadblock for the speaker?

   D. Both A and C.

S.E.E. 9 ANSWERS

1. The correct order is B, C, D, A, E.

   What is the speaker saying to me?

   What is the impact the speaker is having on my emotions?

   What are the feeling labels that I put on those undercurrents?

   What are the sources of my feelings?

   What do I want to say to the speaker?

2. Both A and C are correct. A good listener understands the process of owning of feelings and knows how to identify his own feelings so that they don't get in the way of listening to the speaker.

ROADBLOCK MOVERS

The most difficult skill involved in Owning of Listener Feelings, after recognizing your feelings and the roadblock they create for you as a listener, is moving around the listener roadblocks whenever they occur. Sometimes you will decide to share your listener feelings with the speaker. At other times you may recognize your feelings but choose not to share them with the speaker. The criterion you should use is the extent to which your expressing your feelings will enhance or retard the helping relationship. To do this you will have to assess the effect of the roadblock created by your listener feelings.

When the listener in our second example recognized his feelings he was able to set aside the listener roadblock and respond effectively to what the speaker was saying about her feelings, *without* expressing his feelings to her. Sometimes, however, a listener roadblock will have a significant enough effect on the listener's ability to continue that he will have to employ a "roadblock mover response."

Definition 15 A *roadblock mover response* is a response in which a listener moves roadblocks by (verbally) owning his feelings, without taking the focus from the speaker's immediate concern.

Let's look at some situations when it might be helpful to share your feelings with the speaker.

Examples:

Roadblock Mover 1: The listener owns feelings of confusion and asks for clarification about what the speaker has said.

I can't seem to get out of this depression. Well, it's not a depression because. . .anyway, going to school and working at the same time. . .I never get to have, uh, well, I guess sometimes I do ok. It's just that I want to get away. . .no, not get away, just rest. Maybe I could quit school.

I don't understand. What can I say?

I'm really feeling confused. You seem to be jumping around, and I was having a hard time following you.

The roadblock that needs to be removed is the listener's feeling confused.

Roadblock Mover 2: The listener owns his feelings of being pressured, rejected, seduced, threatened, intimidated, or attracted to the speaker. This describes the speaker's affect on the listener and how the resulting listener feelings get in the way of working on the speaker's problem.

I want you to give me some answers right now! That's why I came here.

I feel like I'm getting a lot of pressure to solve the speaker's problem.

I'm feeling a lot of pressure from you to find some quick answers. I want to check that out with you because it seems to be getting in the way of your working on your problem.

Roadblock Mover 3: The listener owns feelings created by identification with the speaker's concern. This clears the air and keeps the listener from focusing on his own feelings or problems.

I just don't know what to do. My daughter—she's only sixteen—has a drinking problem. I don't know whether I should keep punishing her or try to understand her more. It just breaks my heart when she comes home drunk.
Wow! That's happening with my sister. I don't know what to do either.
That puts me in touch with a lot of pain. I have that problem with my sister. I can really hear you feeling heartbroken over your daughter's problem and confused about how to help.

Roadblock Mover 4: The listener owns feelings that are a result of the speaker's impact on her in order to help the speaker gain additional insight into her immediate concern.

(Caution: The listener must use good judgment in this case. She must have enough data from her interaction with the speaker to know that her perception is valid and helpful. She should also avoid deep, analytical approaches.)